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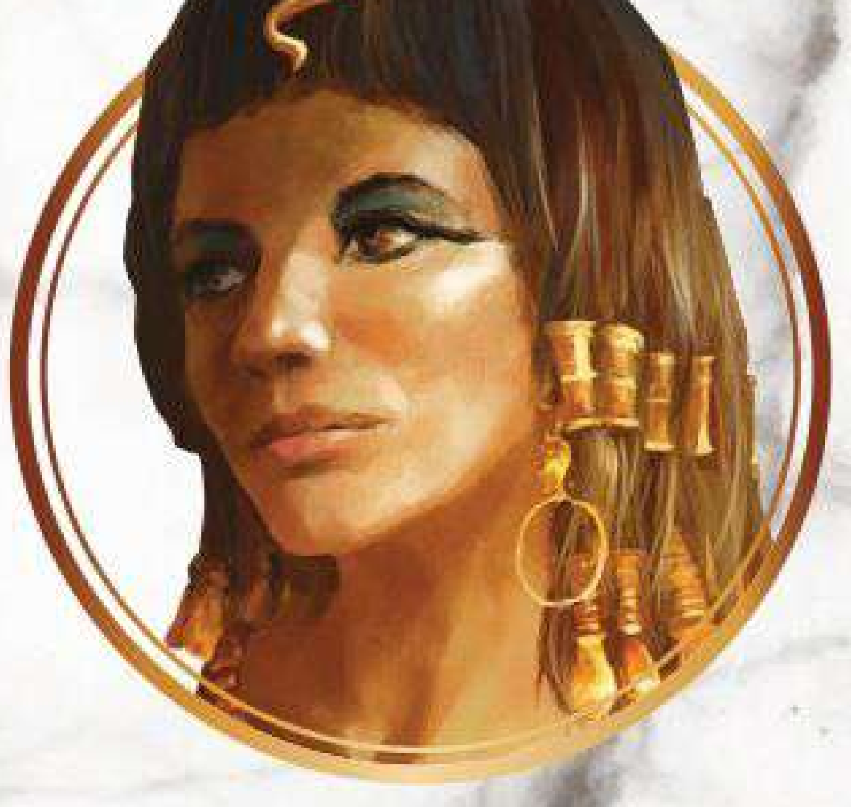
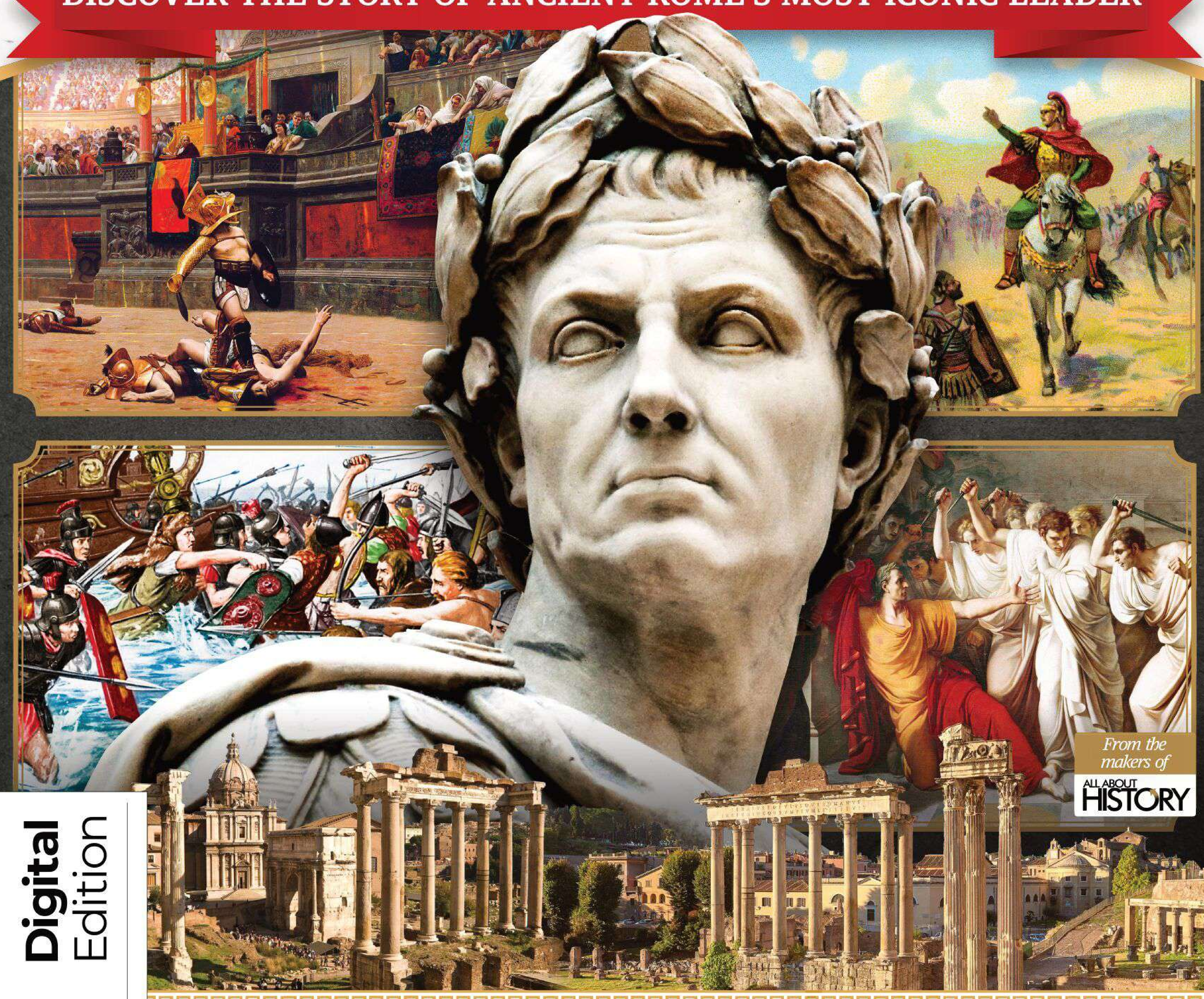


JULIUS CAESAR

DISCOVER THE STORY OF ANCIENT ROME'S MOST ICONIC LEADER



From the makers of ALL ABOUT HISTORY

Digital Edition

FUTURE

FOURTH EDITION

RISE TO POWER ◆ CAESAR IN LOVE ◆ HIS LIFE & LEGACY

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ALL ABOUT HISTORY
Book of
JULIUS CAESAR

Julius Caesar, one of Ancient Rome's most famous rulers and important names in the pages of history, was key in the development and growth of what we know today as the Roman Empire. The All About History Book of Julius Caesar will detail everything you need to know about the Roman general, from his personal relationships that caused major controversy, such as with Cleopatra, to the political campaigns that eventually lost him control over the Roman Republic and led to his tragic assassination at the hands of his own kin. It will also guide you through the cultural and political history of Ancient Rome, including how it went from a mighty kingdom to a crumbling republic, how the Roman people lived their lives and the deities they worshipped. From Caesar's early life to his untimely demise, follow the footsteps of one of the greatest military leaders of all time and discover the enduring legacy he left behind.

FUTURE

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JULIUS CAESAR

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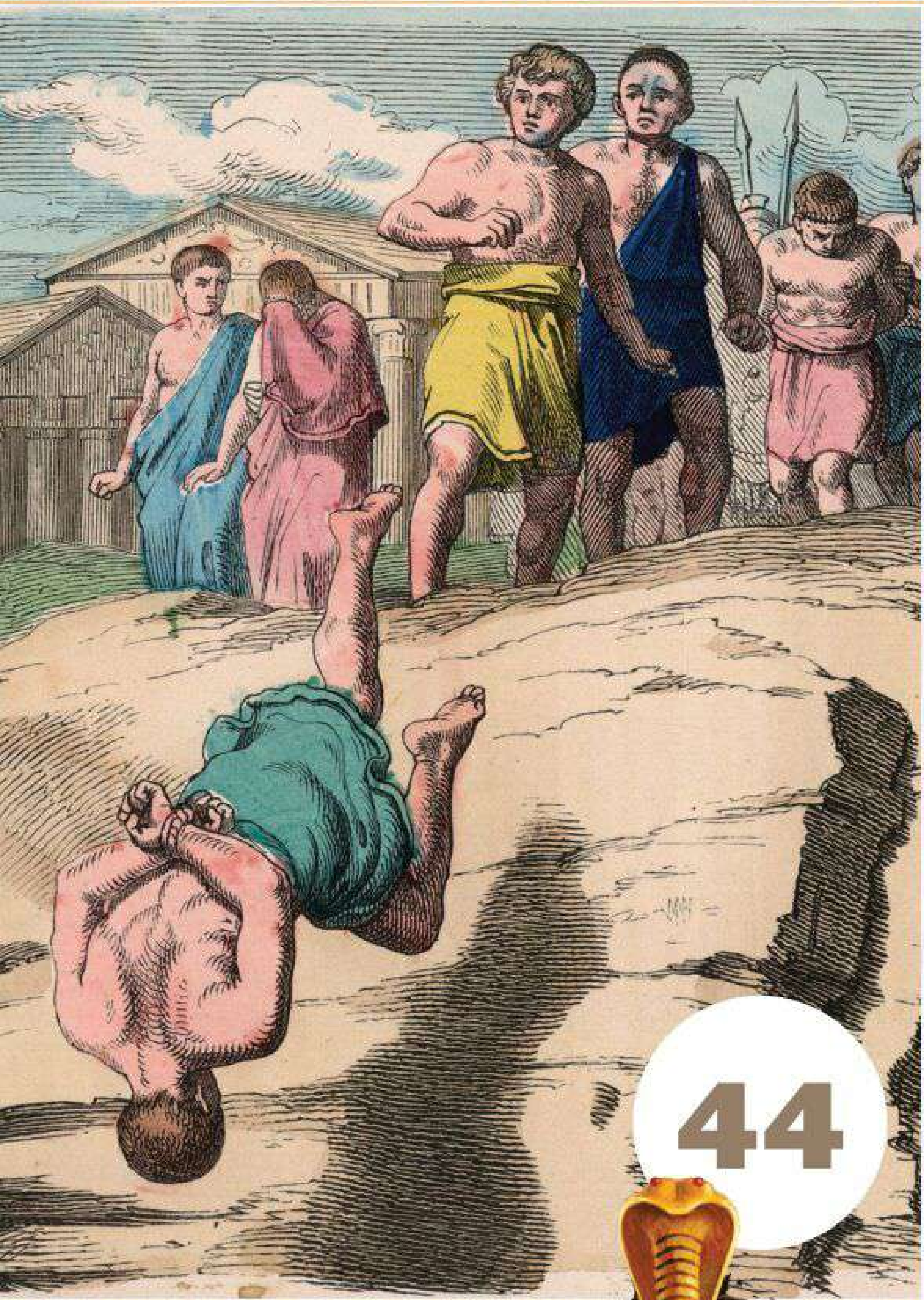

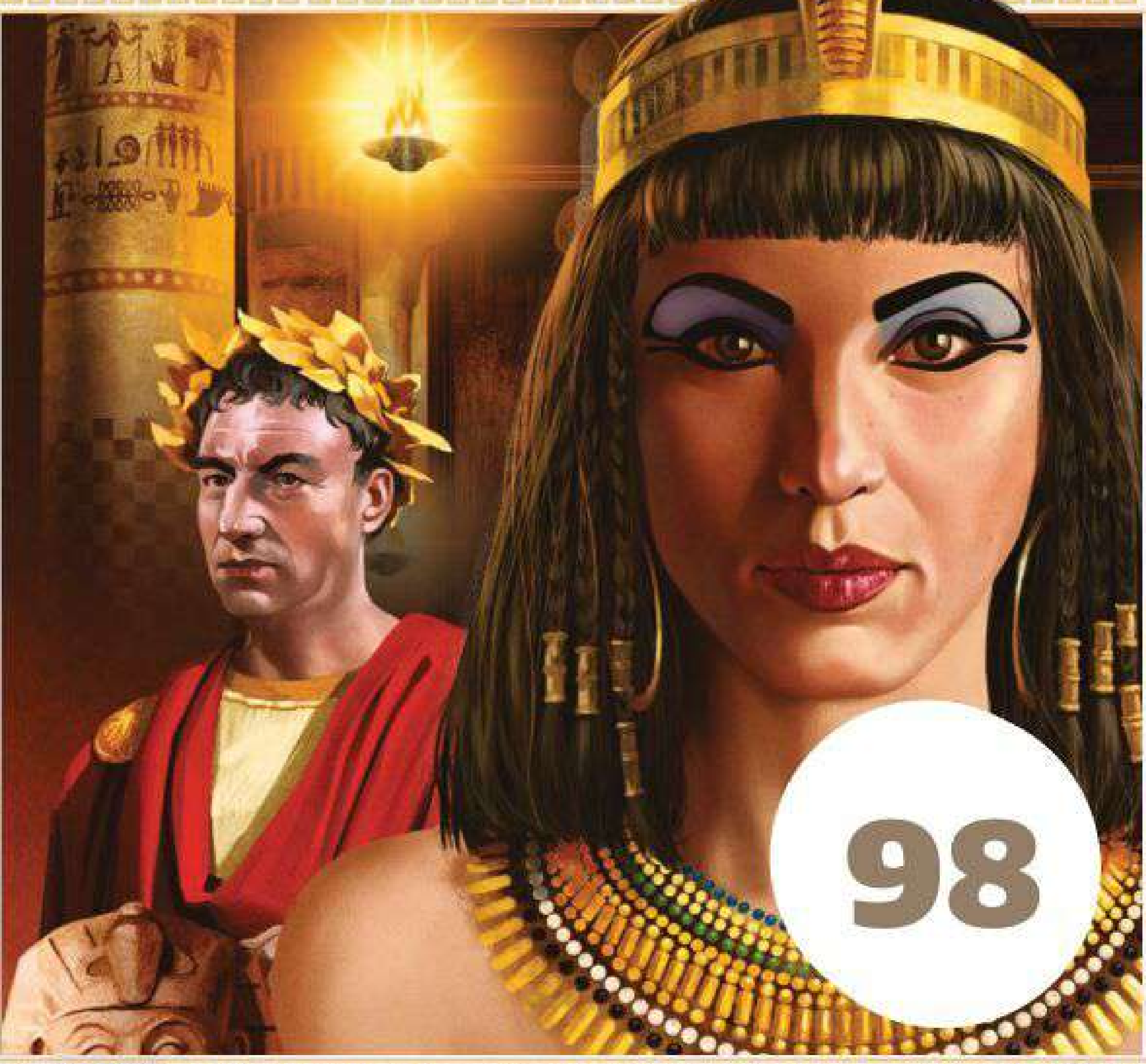

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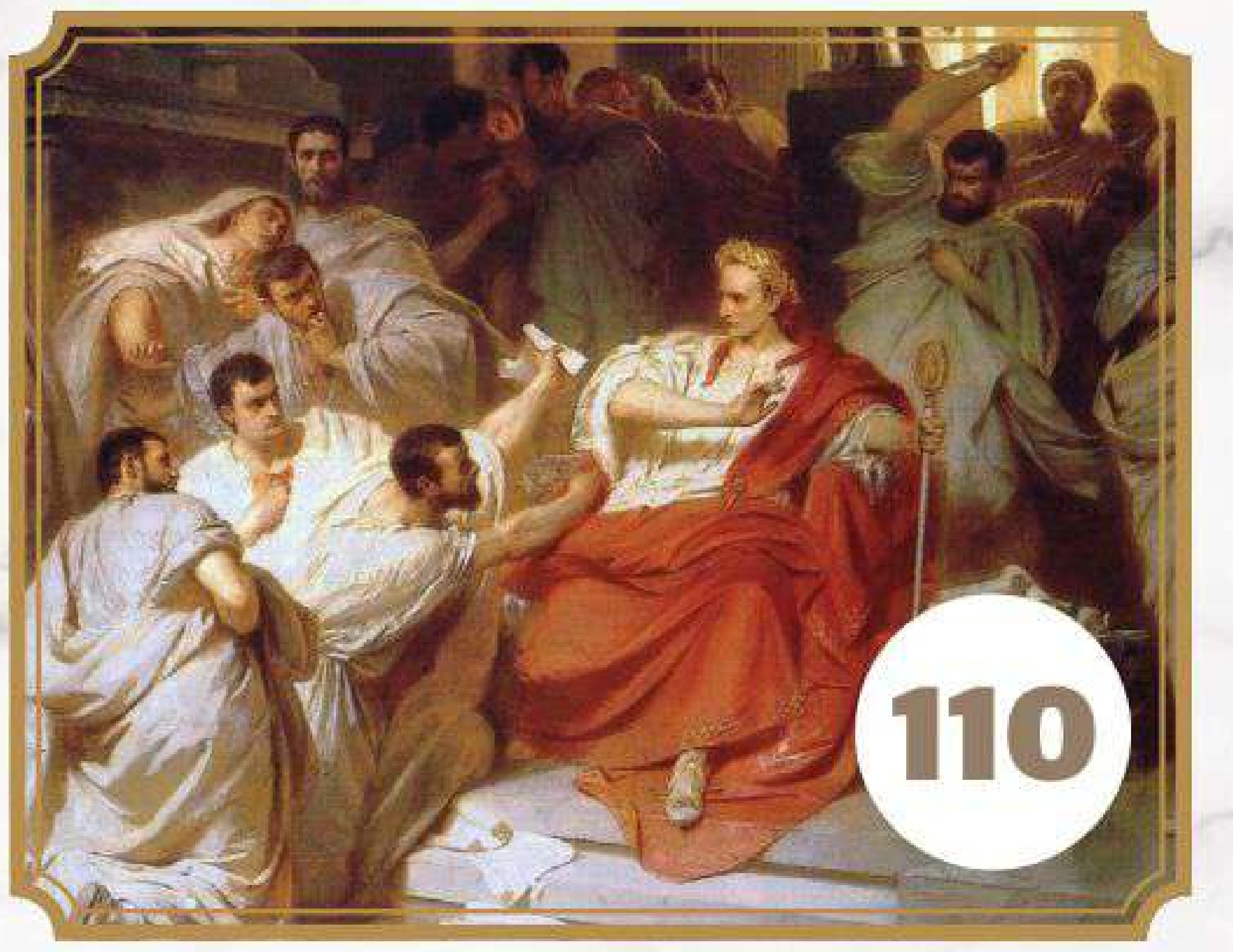

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"Caesar has been considered to be one of the greatest military commanders of all time by many different historians"

History of Ancient Rome

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The legend of Rome

From its humble beginnings as a small kingdom of warring fiefdoms, to one of history's most imposing superpowers, Rome was a nation for the ages

Today, Rome is a beautiful tourist attraction more likely to play host to camera-toting travellers than barbarian hordes, but in the ages of the ancient world it was the epicentre of civilisation. The crown jewel of a nation that assumed every form - kingdom, republic and empire - a realm so powerful it changed the face of history forever. In the name of Rome and its ever-changing governments, it redefined the principles and engineering of warfare, revolutionised modern infrastructure and ushered in the beginning of the Middle Ages.

And like any great superpower, it carved its borders across the face of the world. From the cold shores of Britannia to the warm sands of Palestine and Egypt, Rome created for itself an empire that was a sight to behold, but one that invited attack at every juncture. The ancient world was not a pleasant place - full of plague, storms and warring tribes from every corner of the wild - but it was still a canvas upon which Rome instilled the principles of its own special form of civilisation.

It rose from humble beginnings, forming from the "gens" or clans of Italy, united under a new king with the ambitious vision for a greater state. It was from the fires of that origin that some of the most iconic Roman concepts were forged, not least of which were the very beginnings of the Senate; the democratic voice of the people that spent the next few eras battling the rulers that would come and go at Rome's helm.

As a kingdom, Rome began to fashion itself as a capital to be proud of; the pillars and grand designs of the Greeks and the Etruscans informing an architectural flair that would find itself in everything from municipal buildings to the roads it laid across the realm. The folly of kings soon led Rome to take a new form, forged for a new age: the Roman Republic. It was a shining beacon of democracy built on the back of a military the world had never seen before - organised, disciplined and hardened in the name of conflict and invasion. The legions of Rome became the hammer that conquered the known world, but they would also bring the nation to the brink of destruction in a crisis to follow.

Democracy brought Rome greatness, but also left it open to the schemes of powerful men and the actions of Julius Caesar transformed the nation into a new state, one focused on conquest anew. An empire, with an emperor at its highest seat of office and a desire to reshape in his image. As the Roman Empire, Rome became stronger than ever, but for all its innovations and advancements in engineering (many of which would be lost to the Dark Ages to come), Rome would attempt to rule a world that was changing rapidly. And so its fate would be sealed - one more great empire falling in place of another.

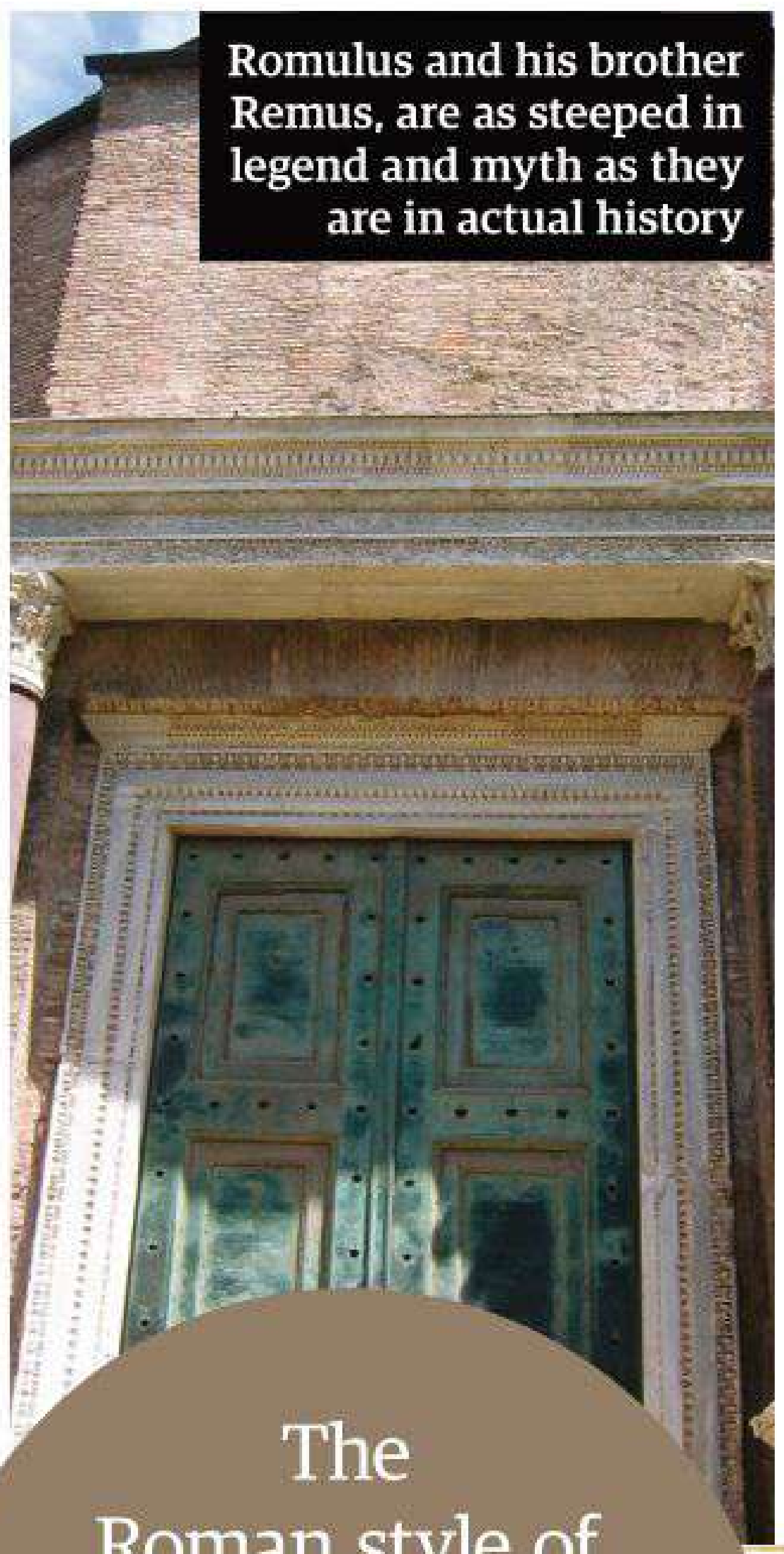
> The Roman Empire technically only refers to a relatively short period in the history of Ancient Rome - it existed as a kingdom and a republic before that.

The Roman Kingdom 753 BCE – 509 BCE

Rome is founded/ Romulus becomes king

753 BCE

Once a series of warring tribes and clans, the strongest among them are united underneath the warrior general Romulus. He installs himself as king and forms the very first incarnation of the Senate. The eldest members from the most powerful and influential *gen* (clans) are chosen, Italy's deeply patriarchal makeup placing a great deal of importance on the wisdom of its older male members. Around 100 members are chosen by Romulus, and the Senate begins by taking care of the day-to-day running of the kingdom. Together, the very first laws of the land are written and the first standing armies formed.



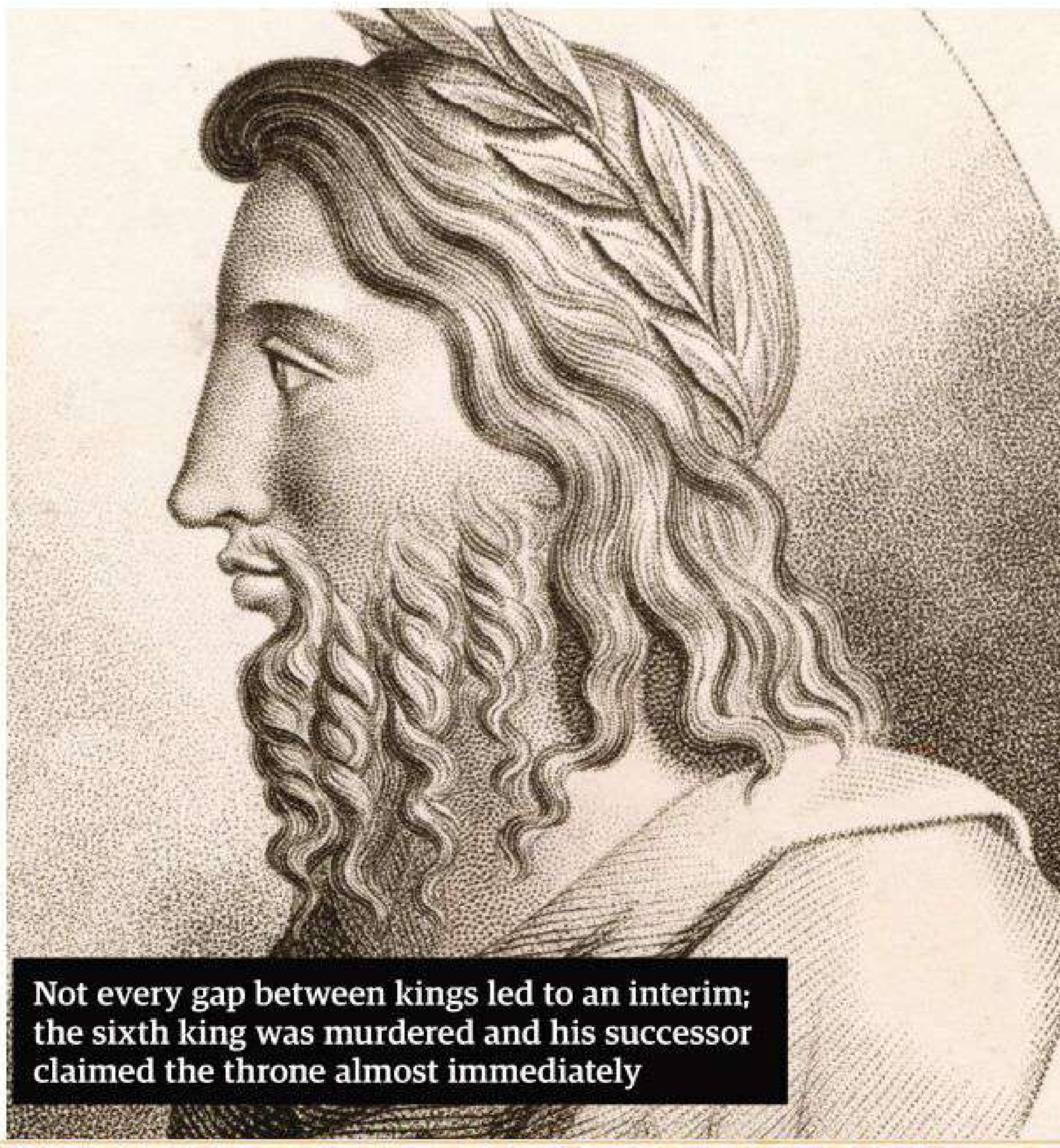
Romulus and his brother Remus, are as steeped in legend and myth as they are in actual history

The Roman style of architecture lives on in the 18th-century neoclassical style that can be seen to this day.

The interim begins

716 BCE

Following the apparent "death" of Romulus, by order of the Senate, Rome enters an "interregnum" (a gap). This is a period of year or less where the traditional form of government simply does not exist, where one king has died but another has yet to be determined. The democratic principles of the Roman Kingdom state that only the Senate or a similar body has the power to make a king, so over a period of a year, ten different men "rule" the kingdom one after the other. This provides the Senate with the information it needs to select one of them as the next king.



Not every gap between kings led to an interim; the sixth king was murdered and his successor claimed the throne almost immediately

Romulus passes away
Around 716 BCE, Romulus mysteriously disappears during a storm. Some legends say he was murdered, but the reality is the kingdom no longer had a king.
716 BCE

Tullus Hostilius becomes king
After a short interregnum, the candidate Tullus Hostilius is selected as king. Unlike his predecessor, Hostilius is a monarch more interested in conquest than peace.
673 BCE

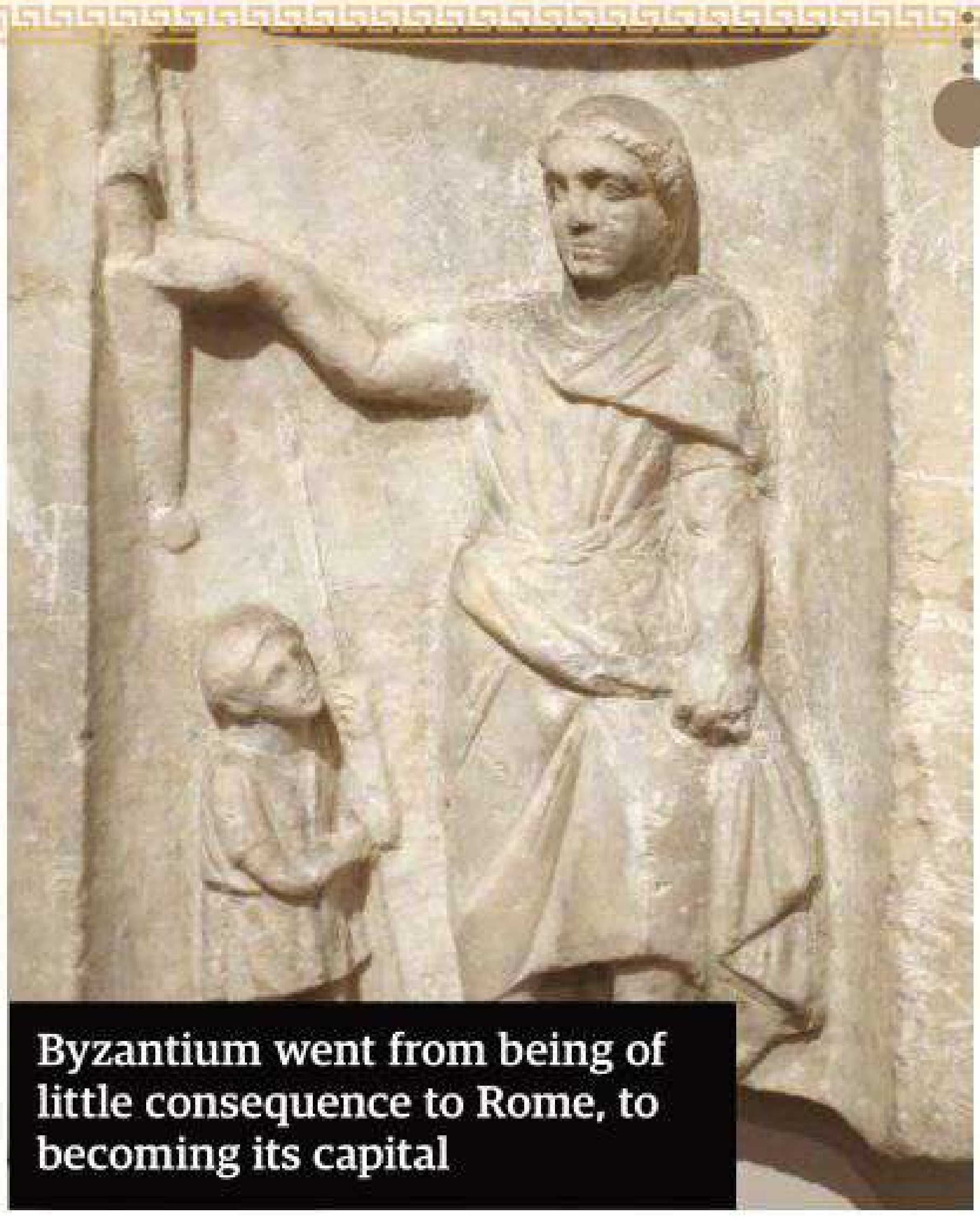
Tullus Hostilius passes away
With a reign that sees Rome's borders expand like never before, the warlike Tullus Hostilius dies. His reign is likened to that of Romulus.
642 BCE

753 BCE — 716 BCE — 715 BCE — 673 BCE — 667 BCE — 642 BCE — 617 BCE

Numa Pompilius is elected king
With the interregnum now over, the Senate swears Sabine noble Numa Pompilius in as king. According to Roman historian Plutarch, Pompilius was born on the day of Rome's founding.
715 BCE

Numa Pompilius passes away
Following a reign that saw many of Rome's religious institutions founded, including many of its temples, Pompilius dies.
673 BCE

Ancus Marcius passes away
The fourth legendary king of the Romans, who helped reaffirm Numa Pompilius' work on Rome's religious infrastructure, dies.'
617 BCE

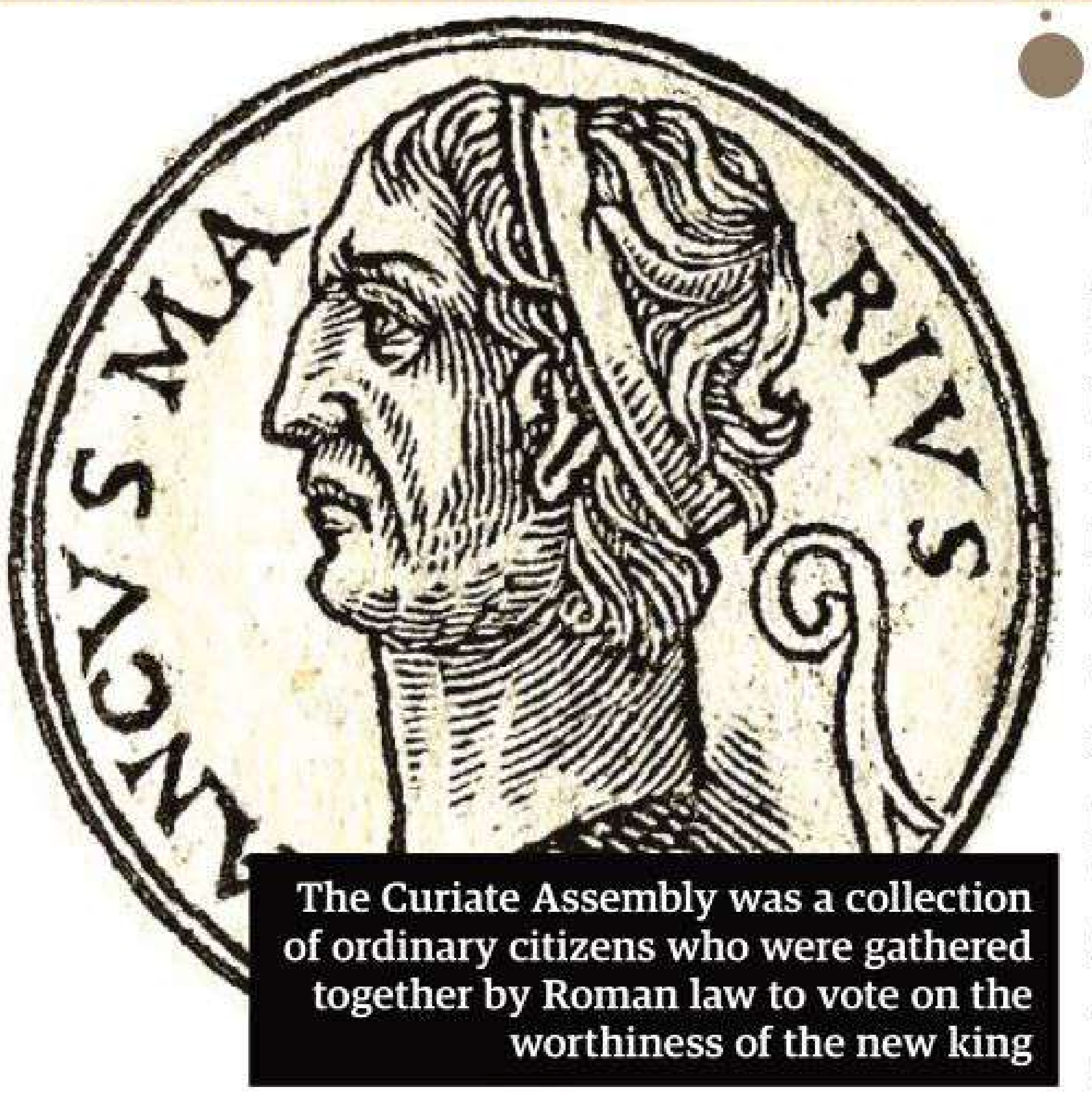


Byzantium went from being of little consequence to Rome, to becoming its capital

Byzantium is founded

667 BCE

Around 667 BCE, the first roots of Byzantium are sown; a nation that will go on to be a foe, and an eventual conqueror of Rome. According to legend, the city was founded by Byzas who sailed from a city-state near Athens called Megara. With its position at the only entrance to the Black Sea, Byzantine would grow into a powerful nation fuelled by its steady trade.



The Curiate Assembly was a collection of ordinary citizens who were gathered together by Roman law to vote on the worthiness of the new king

Curiate Assembly elects Ancus Marcius

642 BCE

As with many kings who ruled in the Regal era, an interim period took place between Hostilius and his successor. In between the election of the new king, an interrex is established (meaning a regent of sorts is appointed to look after the kingdom). The Senate selects suitable candidates before the people of Rome vote who it is they wanted to rule them. The legislative group that appoints the new leader, Ancus Marcius, is known as The Curiate Assembly.

The Forum's central building is constructed

600 BCE

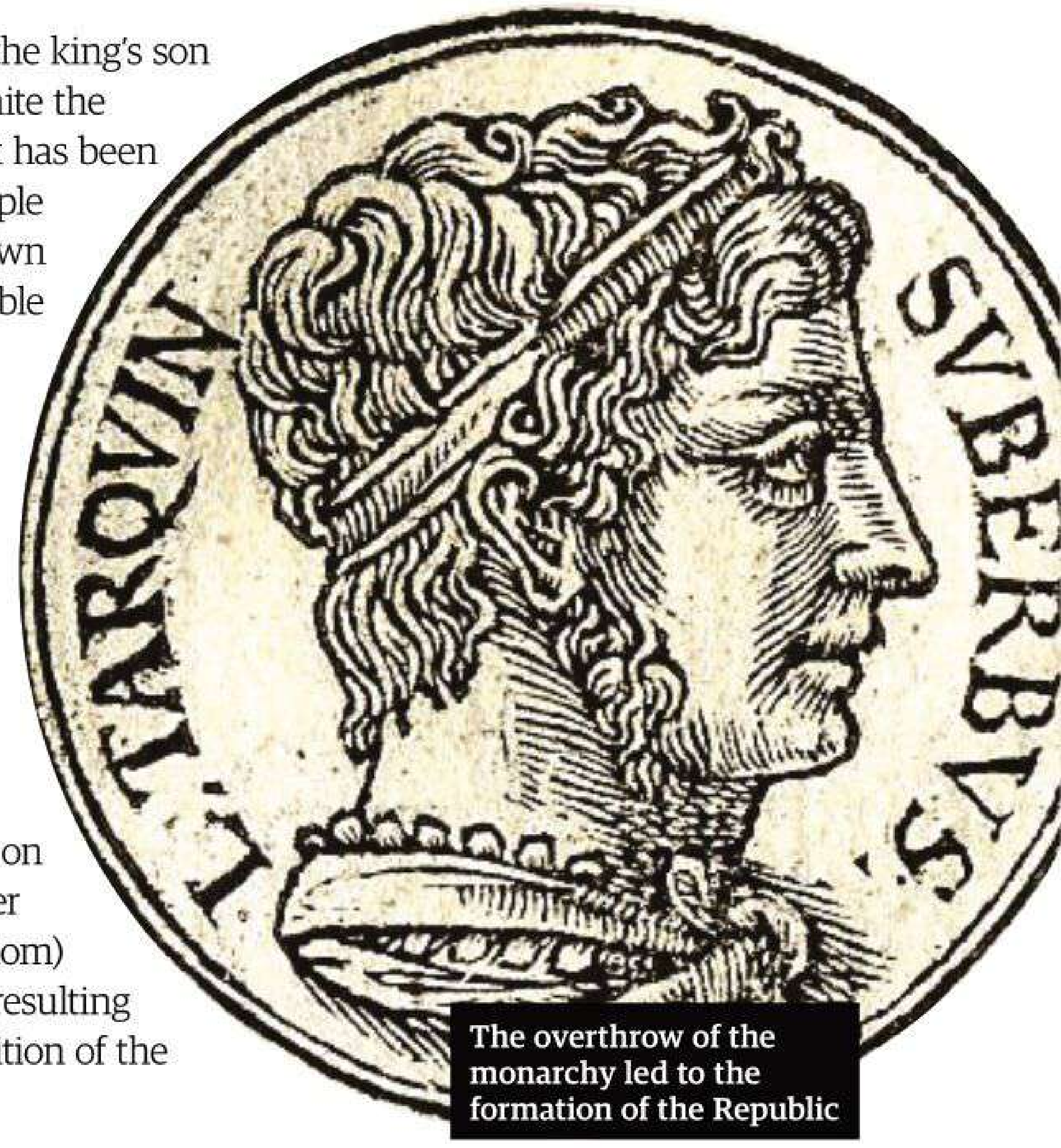
Perhaps the most important structure in Rome's history - the Forum - becomes the home of the Senate and many of the state's important legislative decisions. It is under Lucius Tarquinius Priscus' reign that construction on the Forum is finished. Each of the previous kings had made some pilgrimage in this area, from draining it of water to the building of simple temples. Priscus' contribution is to have the main rectangular building constructed and the entire plaza paved. The Forum becomes a symbol of Rome's democratic heartbeat. More contributions will be made to it over the course of history.

The Roman Forum is still standing today and remains one of the city's most iconic structures

The Roman monarchy is overthrown

509 BCE

The rape of Lucretia by the king's son provides the spark to ignite the political powder keg that has been filling for years. The people and the Senate have grown increasingly uncomfortable with the actions of the king, Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, and his tyrannical rule. His obsession with architecture and building has largely exhausted the royal coffers and his foolish choice of military campaigns (based more on elevating his status rather than bettering the kingdom) leads the people to riot, resulting in his exile and the abolition of the monarchy itself.


L. TARQVIN SVBERBVS.

The overthrow of the monarchy led to the formation of the Republic

616 BCE | 600BC | 579 BCE | 578 BCE | 575 BCE | 550 BCE | 535 BCE | 509 BCE

Lucius Tarquinius Priscus is elected
The fifth king of the Regal era, once again elected by the people, is found in the ambitious politician Lucius Tarquinius Priscus.
616 BCE

Oldest Latin inscriptions
The very earliest examples of written Latin dates back to around this time. It's possible this was when the Romans began actively recording their laws.
600 BCE

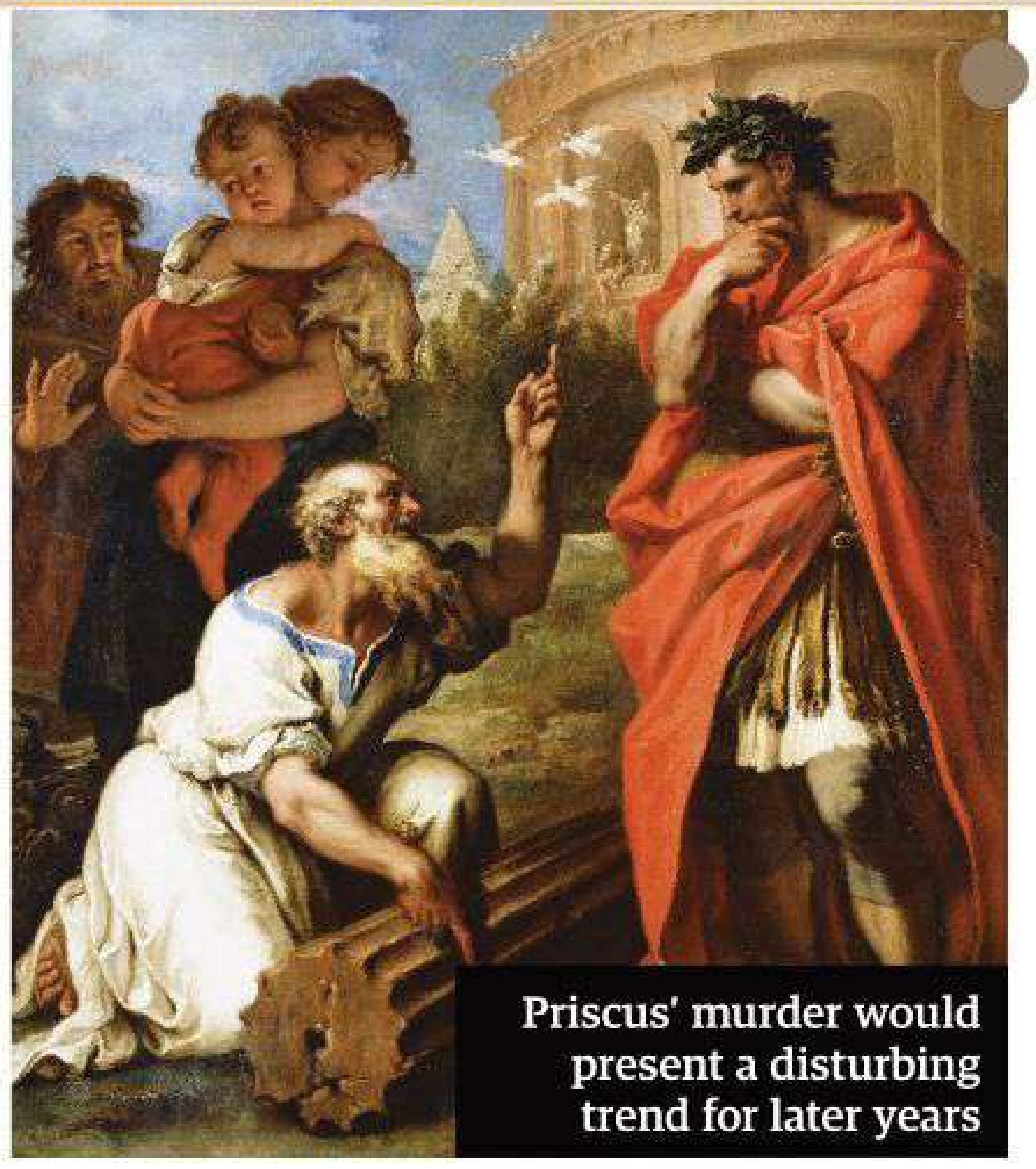
The Cloaca Maxima is built
Under the direction of Priscus, the first true Roman sewer is built beneath the centre of Rome. More primitive versions had been attempted, but this was the first true version.
578 BCE

Servius Tullius becomes king
Following a period of time as regent, the Senate determines him a suitable candidate and electes him as the sixth king (and the second of Etruscan descent).
575 BCE

Tullius builds city walls
In the first example of a Roman leader actively working to protect the city from foes, Tullius begins constructing walled defences around Rome.
550 BCE

Superbus' son rapes a patrician
With Superbus already a deeply unpopular king known for his tyrannical rule, the news that his son Sextus has raped the patrician Lucretia is the final act that sends the kingdom into turmoil.
509 BCE

The raping of Lucretia led her to take her own life

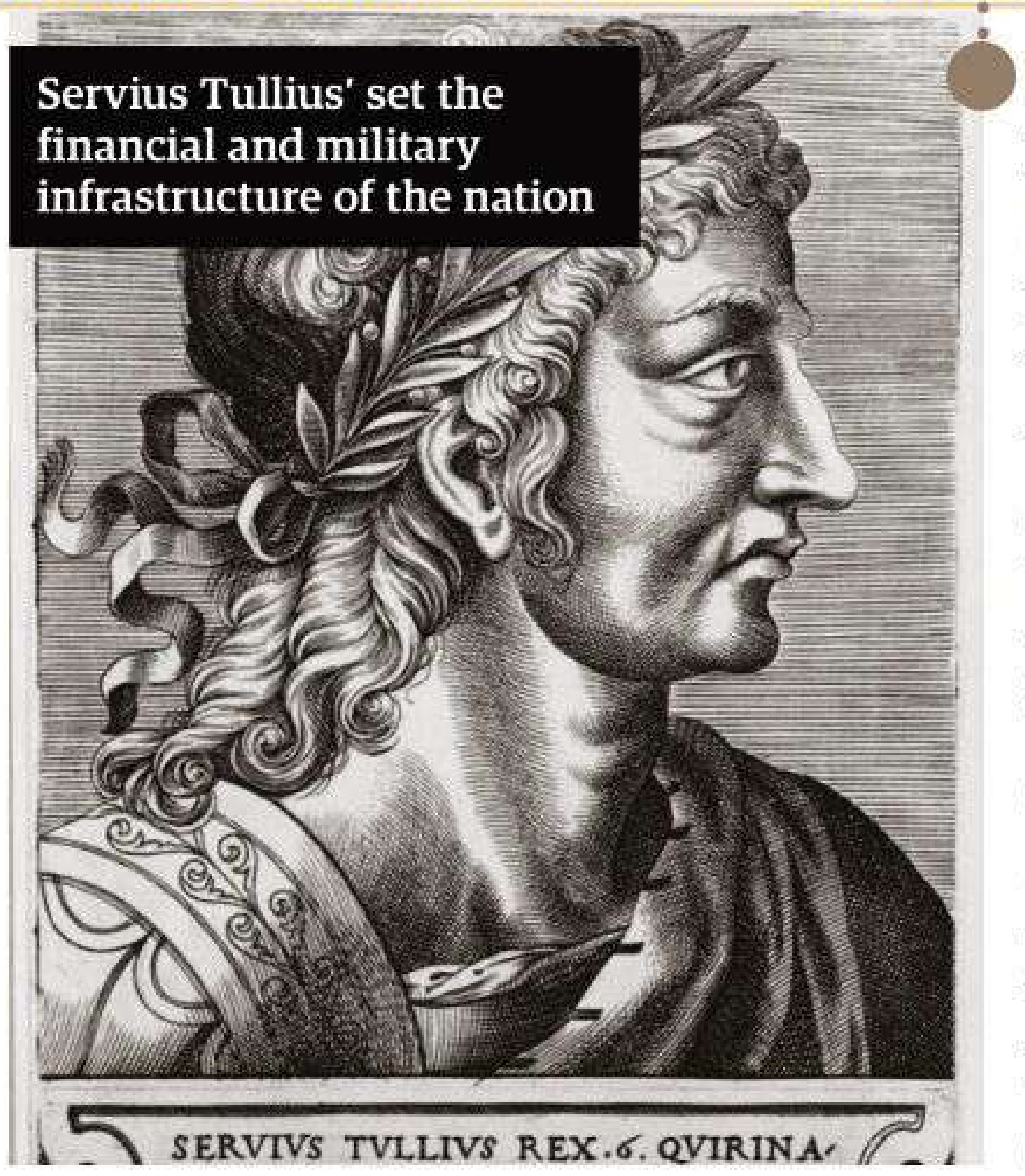


Priscus' murder would present a disturbing trend for later years

Priscus dies in a riot

579 BCE

In the first example of a Roman leader being murdered, Lucius Tarquinius Priscus dies during a riot organised by the son of the previous leader, Ancus Marcius. According to legend, the sons of Ancus Marcius believed the throne should have passed to them so they organised a riot among the people and struck Priscus over the head in the chaos. It's said Priscus' wife found her husband wounded but not dead, and used the time to name the Etruscan Servius Tullius as regent.



Servius Tullius' set the financial and military infrastructure of the nation

Servius Tullius is assassinated

535 BCE

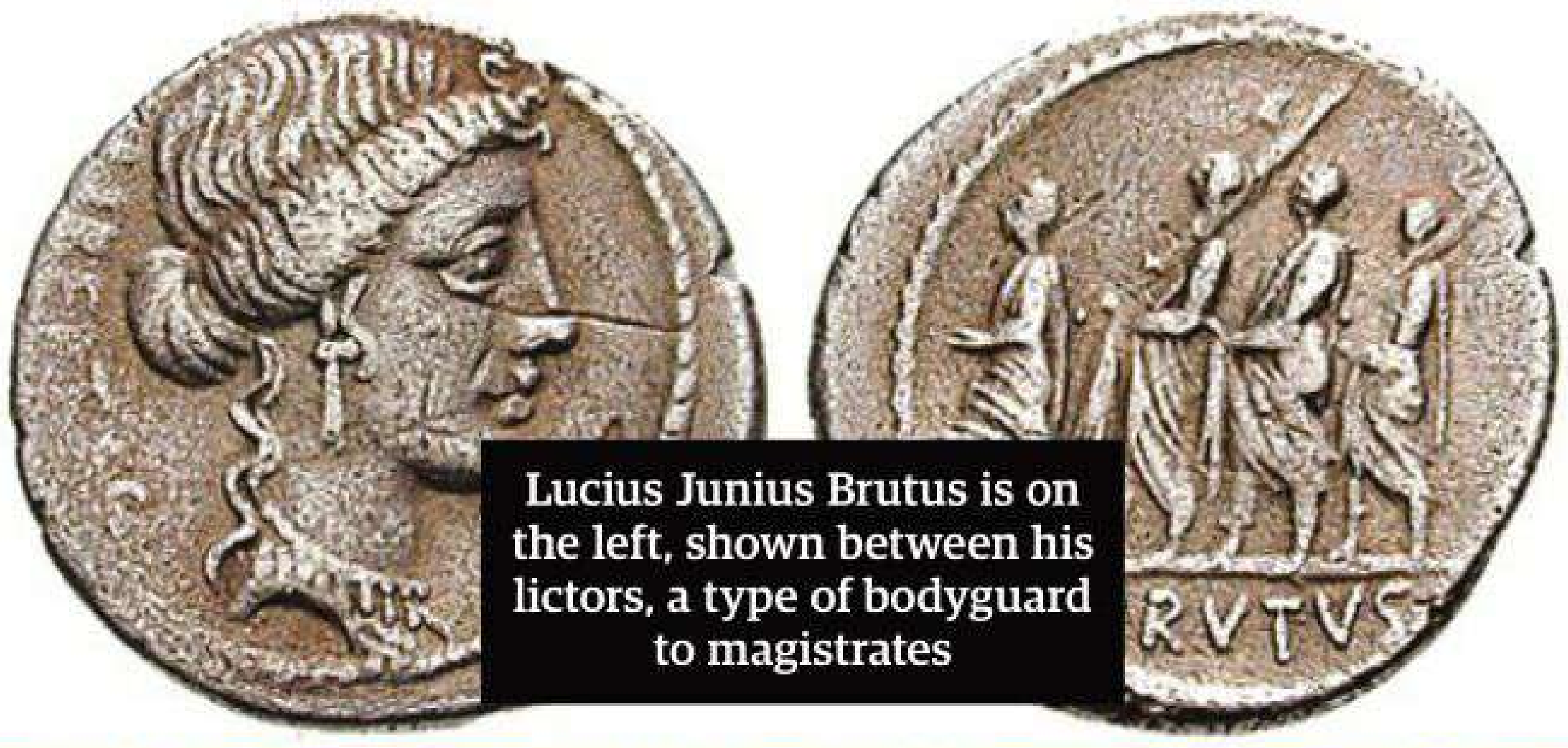
In another example of a disturbing trend in Roman succession, the king Servius Tullius is assassinated after 44 years of rule by his own daughter Tullia and her husband Tarquinius Superbus. Tullius had been a popular king, orchestrating a number of reforms. Superbus convinces the Senate to elect him king regardless and he becomes the seventh (and final) king of Rome. And so begins one of the least popular reigns...

The Roman Republic 509 BCE – 27 BCE

Roman Republic established

509 BCE

Following the overthrow of the monarchy and the exile of Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, the Senate establishes a new Republic state. In this new form, two leaders will rule cooperatively as consuls, elected for a single year each. With the formation of the Republic, new powers are granted to the Senate and to the Plebeian council, giving the people more power and influence over the laws that govern their home. It is decreed that Rome will never again recognise a king of Rome and subsequently elects Lucius Junius Brutus and Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus as its first joint consuls.

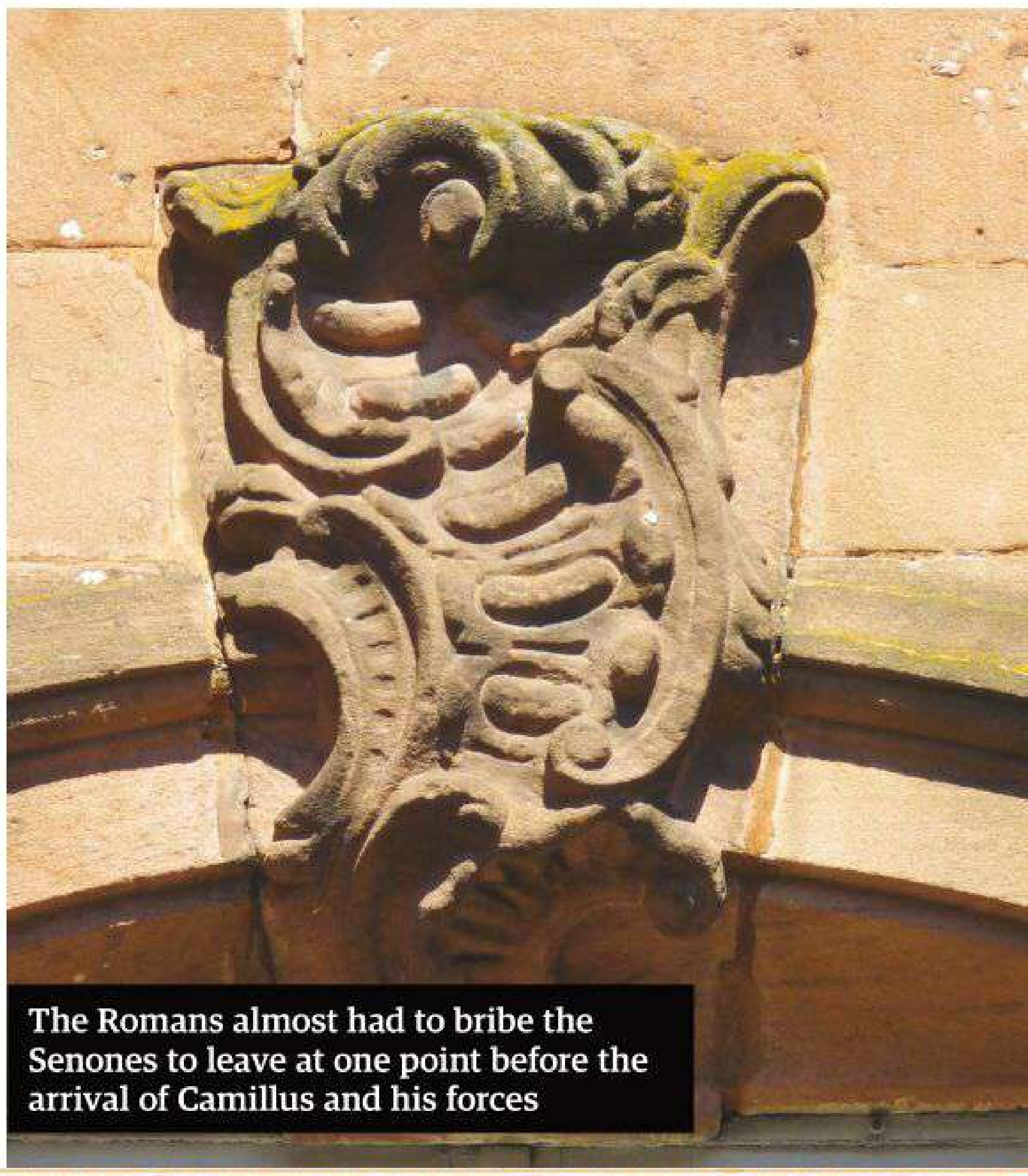


Lucius Junius Brutus is on the left, shown between his lictors, a type of bodyguard to magistrates

Senones sack Rome

390 BCE

In 390 BCE, Rome suffers its worst domestic disaster as the Senones reach and sack the city. On what is believed to be 18 July, the Romans march to meet the forces of the Senones, a large Gallic tribe that have invaded northern Italy. Despite their usual successes against the barbarians, the Romans are almost completely routed, leaving the path to Rome open for the Senones. The Senones find a city largely undefended, and therefore proceed to murder many of its elders, burn buildings to the ground and loot everything they can. Eventually, a roman general called Camillus arrives with a relief force and destroys the Senones.



The Romans almost had to bribe the Senones to leave at one point before the arrival of Camillus and his forces

509 BC | 501 BC | 449 BC | 445 BC | 443BC | 396 BC | 390 BCE | 337 BCE | 293 BC

Battle of Silva Arsia
Republican forces meet those loyal to the deposed and exiled king at the Battle of Silva Arsia. Superbus' forces are defeated, but Lucius Junius Brutus is killed in battle.
509 BCE

Plebeian council given new powers
As further evidence of Rome's growing sense of democracy, the Plebeian Council (formerly known as the Curiate Assembly) is granted the power to help make Roman laws.
449 BCE

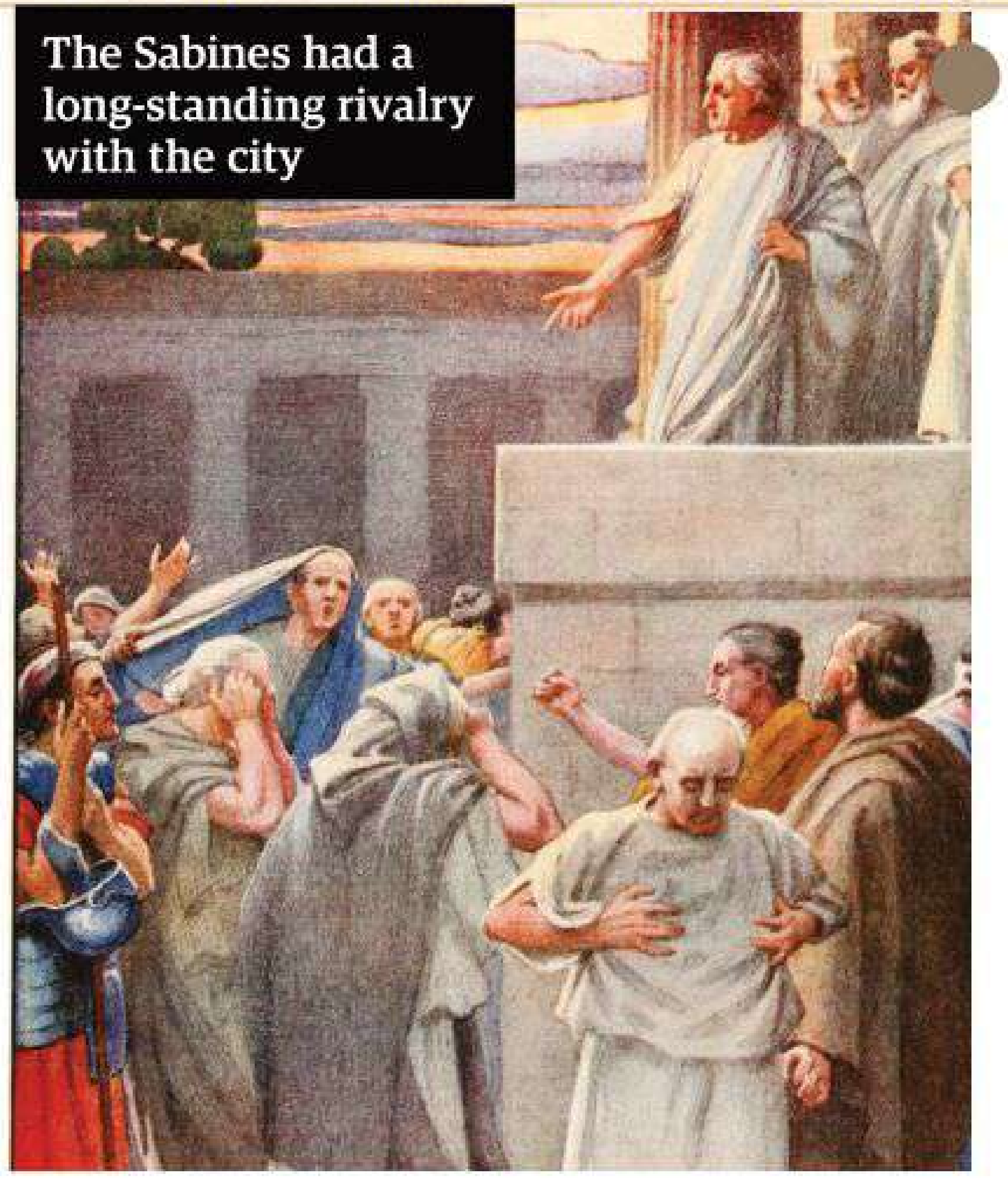
Marriage between patricians/plebeians legalised
In another move created to foster the growing sense of equality between the high-ranking patricians and the normal plebeians, marriage between the two is legalised.
445 BCE

Three consular tribunes established
The offices of the Tribuni militum consulari potestate is established. It's a set of three councils who will hold the power of the consuls in order to settle a power struggle between plebeians/patricians.
443 BCE

Roman soldiers earn a wage
For the first time in the history of Rome, Roman soldiers are finally granted and paid a standing wage. This is due to the wealth brought in by the army's growing list of conquests and new lands.
396 BCE

First Plebeian praetor elected
Despite the political struggles between the patricians and the plebeians, the very first plebeian praetor is elected into office.
337 BCE

Roman census is conducted
In and around 293 BCE, the Office of the Censor conducts an official census which shows the population of Rome has swelled to around 300,000 people.
293 BCE



The Sabines had a long-standing rivalry with the city

Senate passes dictator law

501 BCE

Despite the realm's difficult past with a single man holding too much power, the Senate decides emergency laws are needed to grant temporary ultimate power to an individual in the event of a crisis. This is known as the senatus consultum. With the threat of a Sabine invasion looming, Titus Lartius and Postumus Cominius Auruncus select the former as dictator.

The loss was a substantial one for the Gauls, with around 40,000 killed and another 10,000 taken as prisoners to be sold into slavery

Rome halts a Gallic invasion

225 BCE

The Battle of Telamon in 225 BCE halts a potentially disastrous Gallic invasion. Rome had formed a peace with a handful of the Gallic tribes to the north of Italy's borders. However, a new alliance of Gauls seemingly ignored this and begin moving troops into northern Italy with their eye on Rome. Roman forces under the command of consuls Gaius Atilius Regulus and Lucius Aemilius Papus march to Telamon and defeat the Gauls, extending Roman influence.

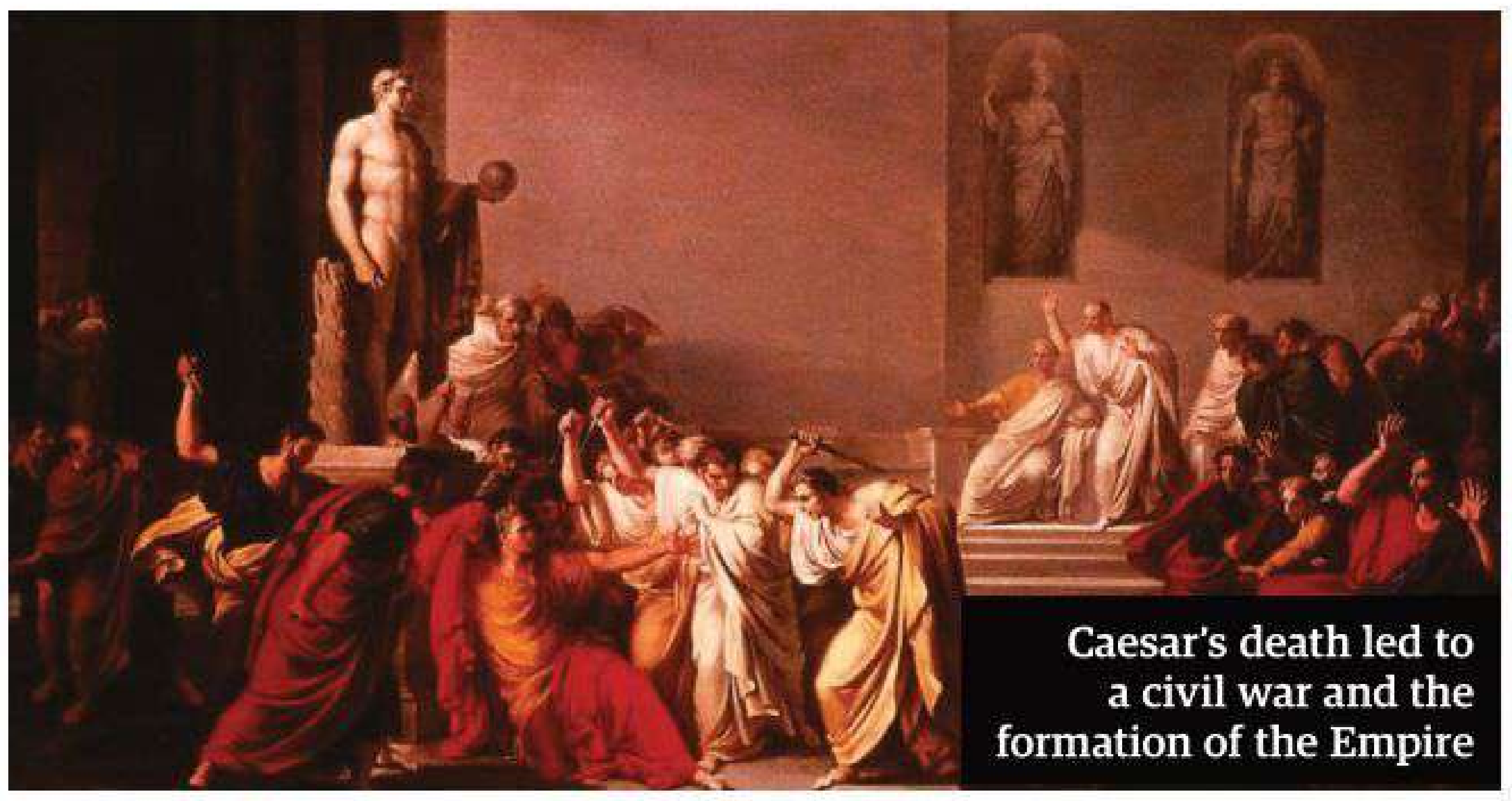
Battle of Arausio

105 BCE

The Battle of Arausio represents one of Rome's worst military defeats, and marks a turning point in the relationship between consuls. It also leads to many important reforms. The battle begins when a large Gallic tribe, the Cimbri, start migrating through Gaul, which causes an imbalance in the hierarchy of the tribes. With the Cimbri now growing in number, two armies under the command of consul Quintus Servilius Caepio and consul Gnaeus Mallius Maximus arrive to meet them. However, tactical disagreements between the two leaders have disastrous results with over 100,000 Roman soldiers dying.

The defeat at Arausio was a wake-up call for Rome and led to serious reforms

© Karl Hammer


Caesar's death led to a civil war and the formation of the Empire

Julius Caesar is assassinated

44 BCE

In the build-up to his assassination, Julius Caesar had risen from consul and member of the First Triumvirate to the most powerful seat in the land. He was not, as is sometimes incorrectly assumed, an emperor, but a dictator who was voted into that position by the Senate in 49 BCE and then again in 45 BCE. The Senate passed a vote making him dictator perpetuo, a role that made many senators who had not voted in his favour fearful that Caesar would install himself as king. On the Ides of March, a conspiracy is put into motion that sees Caesar betrayed by his allies and stabbed to death in the Theatre of Pompey.

225 BC — 146 BC — 121 BCE — 105 BCE — 91 BCE — 73 BCE — 59 BCE — 44 BCE — 30 BCE — 27 BCE

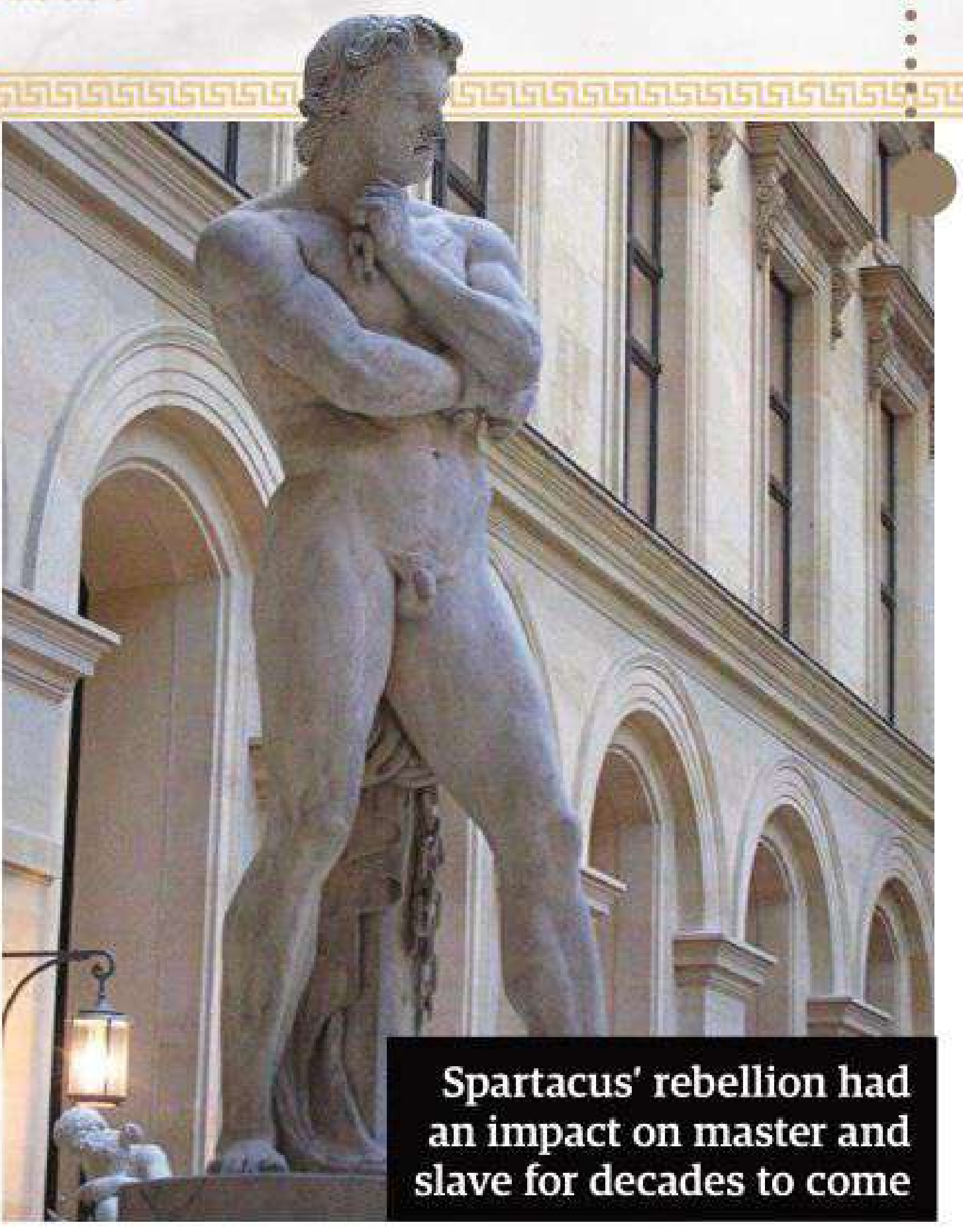
Province of Macedonia established
After a series of long wars with the tribes of Macedonia, the lands are eventually absorbed into the Republic and made a province of Rome.
146 BCE

First Senatus consultum ultimum
In 121 BC, the first Senatus consultum ultimum is passed by the Senate, granting consul Lucius Opimius emergency powers to defeat the forces of Gaius Gracchus.
121 BCE

The Social War
The Social War erupts when a series of Roman cities (known collectively as the Latins) rebel against the inequality in land ownership and wealth between Rome and its allies.
91-88 BCE

First Triumvirate formed
The first Triumvirate, an alliance between three of Rome's most powerful politicians (Julius Caesar, Pompey and Marcus Licinius Crassus) is formed.
59 BCE

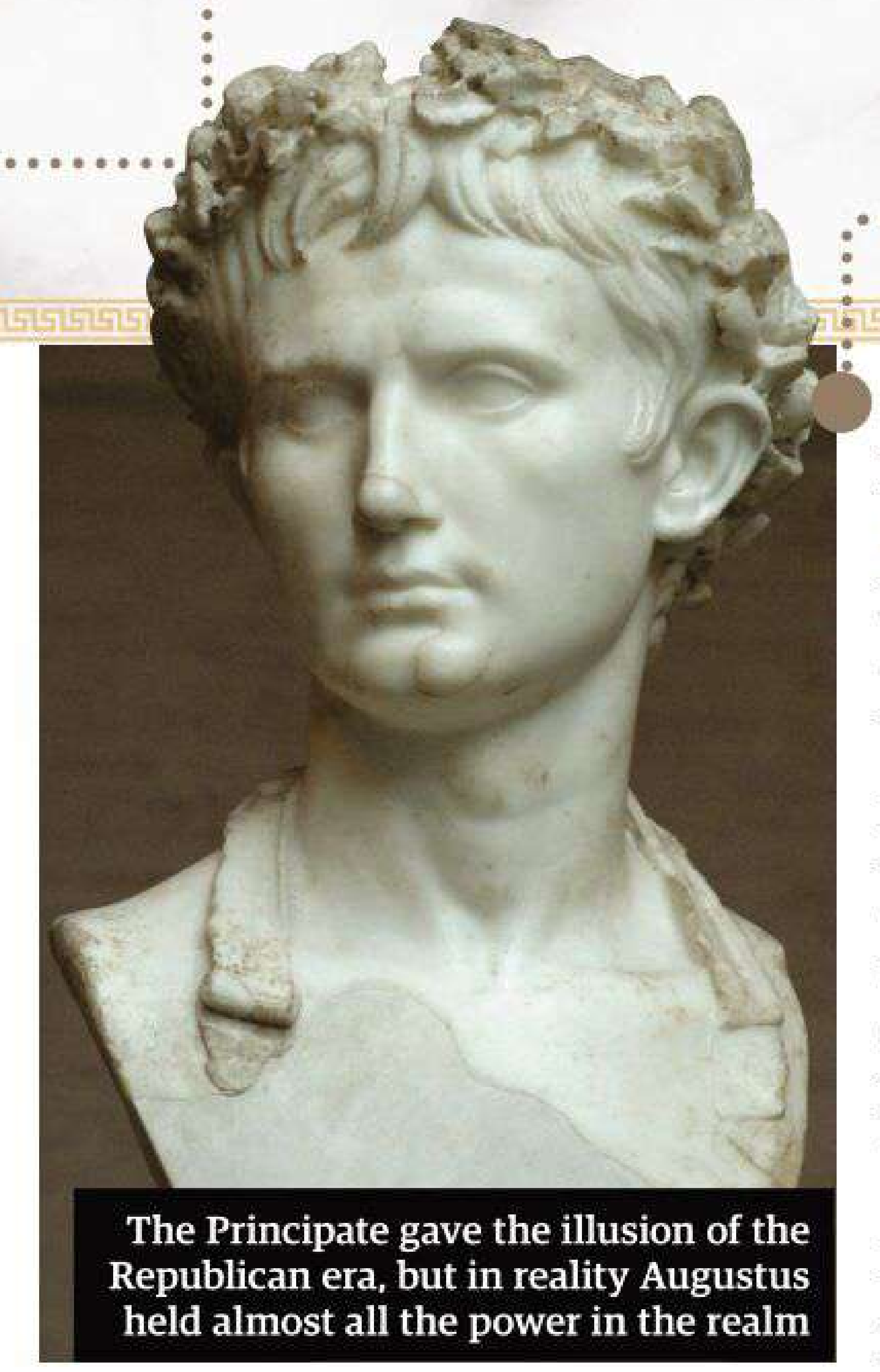
Province of Egypt established
Around 30 BCE, Egypt's dominance of North Africa has faded and it is absorbed into Rome, becoming a Roman province as a result.
30 BCE


Spartacus' rebellion had an impact on master and slave for decades to come

Third Servile War begins

73-71 BCE

The third and final slave rebellion, which is led by Spartacus, is the only servile uprising to threaten the stability of Rome itself. A band of escaped gladiators begins swelling with slaves who wish to know true freedom. Under the leadership of slave and gladiator Spartacus, the loosely armed rebels defeat a number of Roman forces before Roman commander Marcus Licinius Crassus crushes the uprising.


The Principate gave the illusion of the Republican era, but in reality Augustus held almost all the power in the realm

Augustus is made emperor

27 BCE

Following the death of his great-uncle Julius Caesar, Gaius Octavius forms the Second Triumvirate with Marc Antony and Marcus Lepidus to find his assassins. The alliance causes a civil war. Lepidus is eventually driven into exile and Marc Antony commits suicide following his defeat at the Battle of Actium. Still granted the ultimate power of office by the Senate, Augustus begins creating a framework with the Senate – the beginning of the Principate and the Empire itself.

The Roman Empire 27 BCE – 476 CE

Roman conquest of Britain

43 CE

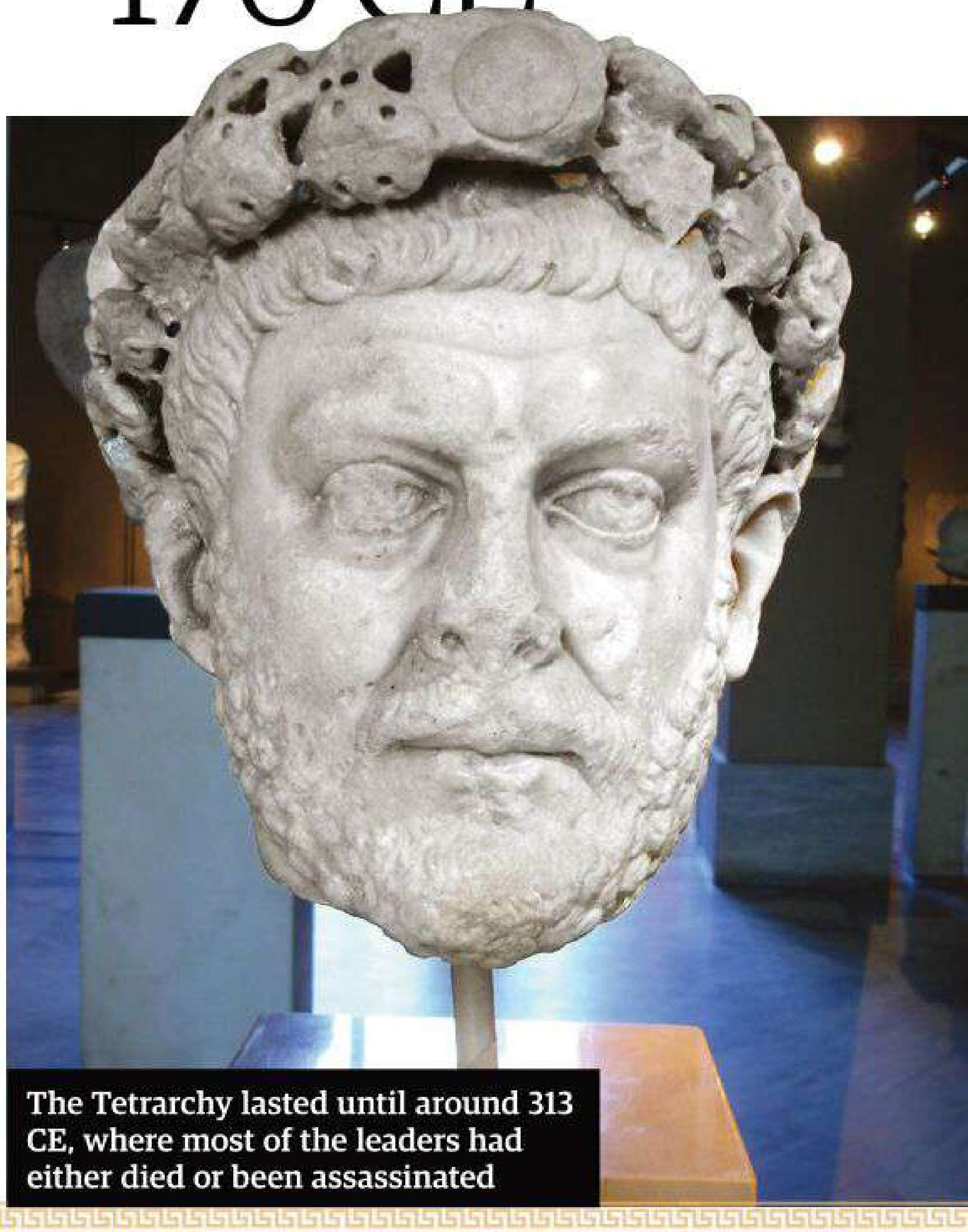
Prior to emperor Claudius' campaign to conquer Britannia once and for all, the Romans have enjoyed a relatively healthy trading relationship with the tribes of Britain since Julius Caesar's first settlements in 55 BCE. However, the Catuvellauni have taken over from the Trinovantes as the most powerful kingdom in south-eastern Britain. The Catuvellauni begin encroaching on the land of the Roman loyal Atrebates, forcing Rome to send troops to pacify Britannia once and for all. The campaign eventually takes the Romans through England and into Scotland.

Britain provided considerable resources for the Empire, but it was a difficult province to control

Diocletian established the Tetrarchy

293 CE

Following almost 50 year of chaos, civil war and divided states, the politician Diocletian is recognised as emperor by the Senate and establishes a new form of governance - the Tetrarchy. Alongside three other co-emperors, Diocletian divides the Roman Empire into four separate states to be governed by each individual emperor with mutual cooperation between all four sections of the realm. The concept, for a time, proves a success - with every state having its own capital and standing armies. However, despite the joint nature of the nation, Diocletian is ultimately the supreme leader.



The Tetrarchy lasted until around 313 CE, where most of the leaders had either died or been assassinated

Senate grants Augustus new titles
As part of Octavian's new position as the ultimate ruler of Rome, the Senate grants him the titles of Augustus, Majestic and also Princeps.
27 BCE

Boudicca's revolt in Britannia
One of the biggest revolts in Roman Britain is led by the queen of the Iceni, Boudicca. She leads a force of 100,000 men but is ultimately defeated.
60 CE

Great Fire of Rome
Legend says that the fires that consumed a significant proportion of Rome's infrastructure was in fact set by emperor Nero himself. Nero blames the Christians, leading to a bloody purge.
64 CE

Colosseum is completed
In 80 BCE, the largest amphitheatre ever built is finally finished in the heart of Rome. It can house 50,000 spectators and becomes a symbol of Rome's endless passion for bloodsports.
80 CE

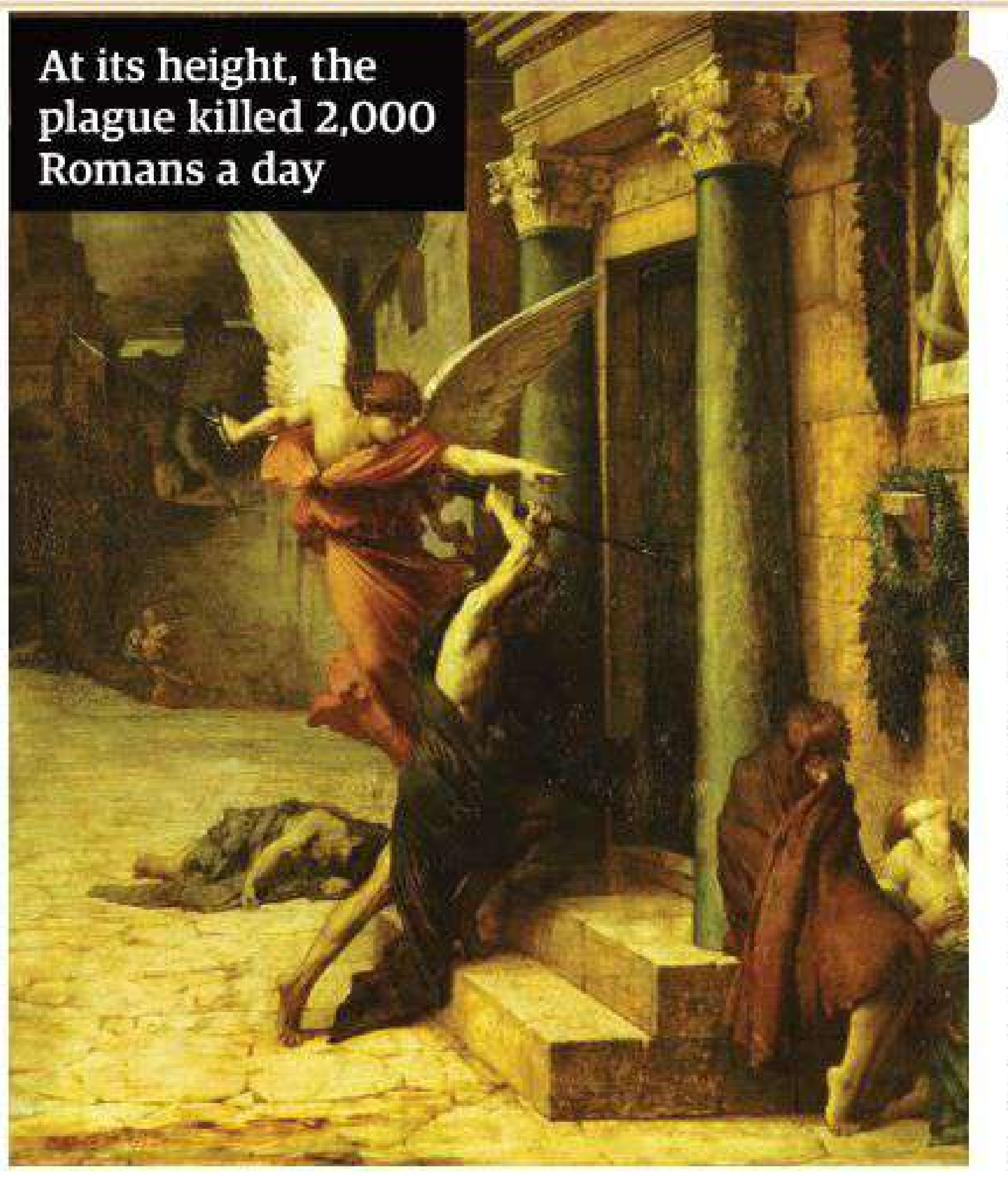
Hadrian's Wall is started
In order to keep the barbarians of Scotland and the north of Britannia at bay, emperor Hadrian orders a wall to be constructed. It becomes known as Hadrian's Wall and survives to this day.
122 CE

Crisis of the Third Century
The Crisis of the Third Century is a half-century-long period of civil war and turmoil as 26 different emperors are crowned and Rome splits into three different states.
235 CE

Battle of Carthage
Forces loyal to the joint emperors of Gordian I and his son Gordian II are destroyed by those belonging to emperor Maximinus Thrax. Gordian I is killed and Gordian II soon commits suicide.
238 CE

Emperor Valerian taken prisoner
In a shock development for the Roman Empire, the emperor Valerian is taken captive during a battle with the Sassanid Persian Empire. He dies in captivity.
260 CE

27 BCE · 43 CE · 60 CE · 64 CE · 80 CE · 122 CE · 165 CE · 235 CE · 238 CE · 260 CE



At its height, the plague killed 2,000 Romans a day

The Antonine Plague strikes

165 CE

One of the worst pandemics to ever ravage Rome, the Antonine Plague (likely a form of smallpox or perhaps an early form of measles) ends up claiming the lives of over 5 million Romans. It is thought the plague was brought back with troops returning from the Near East. The plague, which rages on and off for around 15 years, even claims the life of the emperor Lucius Verus.

Constantine's reforms changed Rome forever --including a new coinage to battle inflation and the relocation of the capital to Byzantium

Constantine becomes first Christian emperor

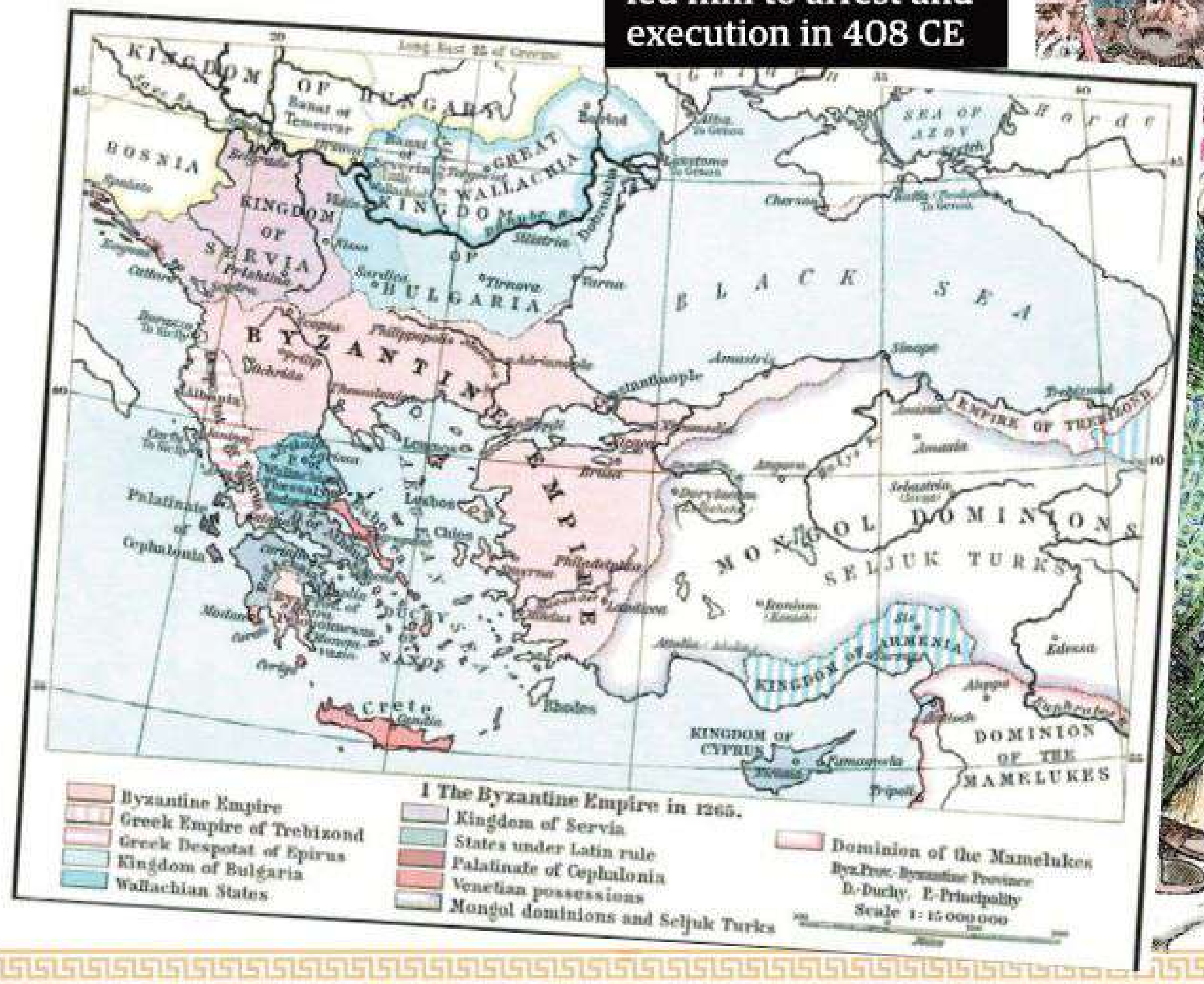
306 CE

Christians had an uneasy relationship with the religion of Rome. In fact, as recently as Diocletian, the Christian community had been demonised and purged. However, that all changed when Constantine - the son of one of the first members of the Tetrarchy - becomes the sole emperor. He sets about reforming the national mindset and even chairs the First Council of Nicaea in 325 CE where an assembly of bishops is called to create a consensus of modern Christianity.

Rome is divided into two empires

395 CE

A direct result of Constantine's desire to rule the Roman Empire from the East in Byzantium, it is decided that the realm should be operated by the two imperial administrations. The Empire is initially divided by Theodosius I upon his deathbed, carving the realm into the Western Roman Empire and the Eastern Roman Empire and granting rule to his two sons. As a result, Arcadius becomes augustus of the eastern Byzantine Empire and his brother Honorius becomes augustus of the Western Empire. To the Romans, the country is far from divided, instead the notion of two separate governments looking after one country is seen as the norm.



For a time, the governance of the Western Roman Empire fell to regent Stilicho before his ineptitude at the task led him to arrest and execution in 408 CE

Rome's history had come full circle, with the monarchy reestablished as the traditional empire fell away

Western Roman Empire falls

476 CE

By the middle of the 5th century, the Western Roman Empire is a shadow of its former self. The position of emperor no longer wields the power and respect it once did, and the Empire lacks the stability of the Byzantine Empire to the East. The current emperor, Romulus Augustulus, had been installed by his father a year prior but doesn't have the support of the people or the Senate. This leads to the military commander Odoacer leading a revolt that removes the emperor and his installation as patrician. With the support of the Senate, he is the first king of Italy.

Visigoths sack Rome
For the first time in 800 years, Rome is successfully overrun by an enemy of Rome. The city is sacked and almost burned to the ground by the Visigoths, led by their king, Alaric.
410 CE

293 CE | 306 CE | 330 CE | 395 CE | 410 CE | 476 CE

Capital moved from Rome to Constantinople
As part of Constantine the Great's systematic upheaval of Roman values, he abandons Rome and sets up his new capital, Constantinople, in modern day Istanbul.
330 CE

> "The Roman Empire was ahead of its time, with even the Dark Ages failing to eliminate its mark"

The lasting effects of the Romans

The Roman Kingdom, Republic and Empire were very powerful so it's no surprise to see the imprint of that nation today. From language to infrastructure, the Roman Empire was a state far ahead of its time, with even the regressive years of the Dark Ages failing to eliminate its mark.

Latin, the official language of the empire, didn't die with the realm but instead flourished. It was adopted as the official language of the Catholic Church and became the ipso facto language of the sciences. It can be found in English, German, Dutch and many other modern dialects.

Our calendars owe their structure and style to the Romans – the Julian calendar, introduced by Julius Caesar, made the year 365 days long and divided it into 12 months. It was also the Romans who chose to begin the year in January and add a leap year every four years in February. The Romans also introduced the seven day week, with the planets forming their names (except Sunday, which has its origins in Christianity).

The Romans' use of democracy and forums is still seen among countless nations, while its embrace of Christianity under Constantine the Great helped secure Rome as the home of the Catholic Church. Elsewhere, the Romans' use of sewers, aqueducts and roads showed the rest of the world how to build lasting infrastructure.

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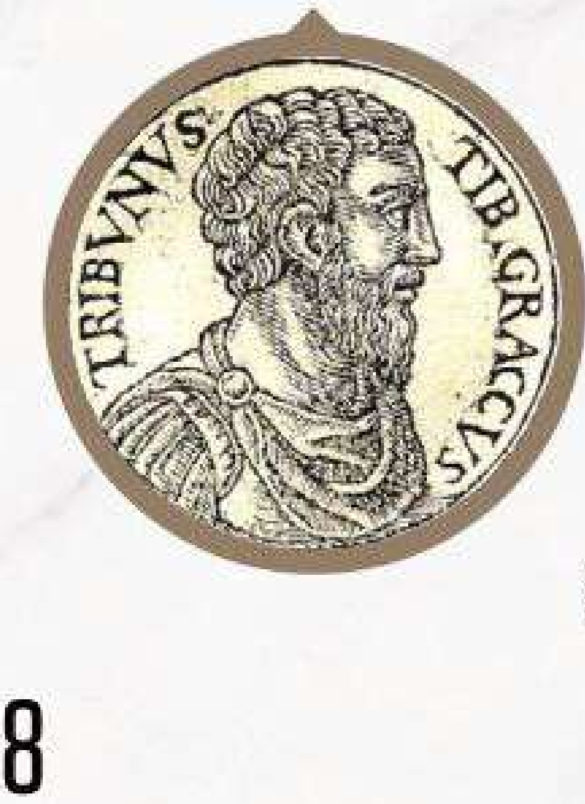
Bluffer's guide EUROPE, 133 BCE – 27 BCE
The Fall of the Roman Republic

Julius Caesar was never an emperor. Instead, he installed himself as 'dictator in perpetuum' just prior to his assassination in 44 BCE.

Timeline

133 BCE



The brutal murder of tribune Tiberius Gracchus sparks a chain of events that ultimately leads to the Roman Republic's downfall.

107 BCE

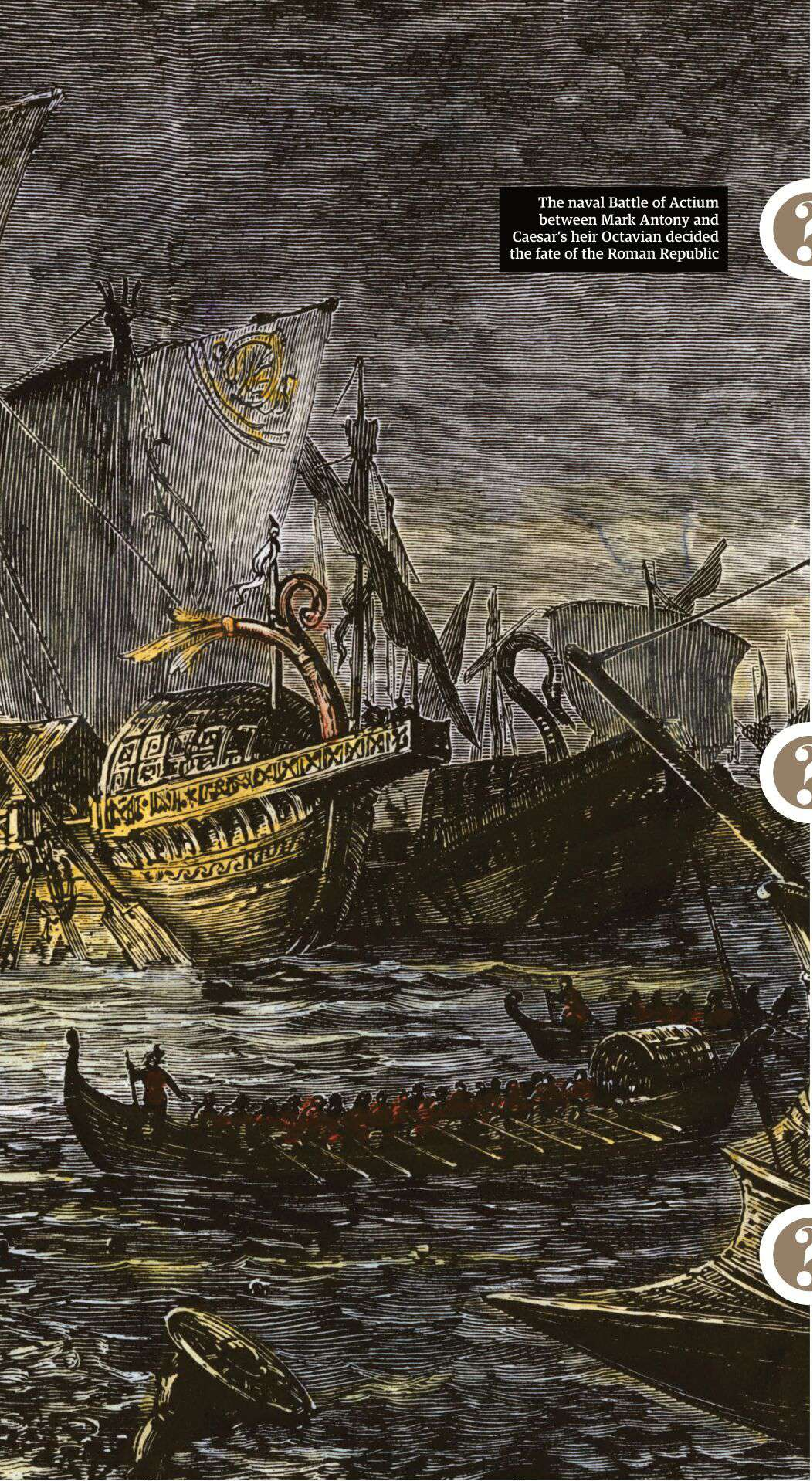
General Gaius Marius becomes consul and abolishes the requirement to own property before being able to join the army.

1 NOVEMBER 82 BCE

Following his rebellion, Sulla defeats the remnants of Marius' supporters at the Battle of the Colline Gate to secure power.

17 MARCH 45 BCE

Caesar's decisive victory in Munda, Spain, ends the civil war and enables him to install himself as ruler of Rome.



The naval Battle of Actium between Mark Antony and Caesar's heir Octavian decided the fate of the Roman Republic

What was it?

After centuries of peace and prosperity, aided by almost untrammelled expansion across the Mediterranean, the Roman Republic was plunged into crisis in 133 BCE following the murder of popular official Tiberius Gracchus, a killing allegedly sanctioned by the Senate. The following years were marked by social unrest as politicians battled it out. General Gaius Marius, a successful military campaigner, seized the office of consul in 107 BCE.

In 88 BCE, following a challenge for power from Lucius Sulla, Marius' quaestor (state treasurer), who subsequently rebelled against Rome, a reign of terror ensued that purged many of the people's representatives.

Sulla died in 78 BCE only to be replaced by Gnaeus Pompeius, better known as Pompey the Great, who would later serve in Rome's First Triumvirate alongside Marcus Crassus and Julius Caesar.

Pompey and Caesar quickly became entrenched in their respective positions, leading to a series of civil wars that would culminate in Octavian (Caesar's adopted heir) becoming the first emperor of Rome in 27 BCE, heralding the end of the Republic.

What were the consequences?

The fall of the Roman Republic witnessed the decline of a democratic system that had governed the state since its foundation in 509 BCE following the overthrow of the hated Roman monarchy.

After the disposal of the kings, the title of consul was introduced and shared between two men. More power was also granted to the senate, and tribunes (officials) were elected to represent the people. However, this style of governance was changed by the Republic's demise.

The social unrest and military opportunism that blighted Rome in the last century BCE and led to Julius Caesar eventually snatching power effectively put an end to a system of rule that had heeded the requests of the people. And while Caesar's rapacious ambition would lead to his downfall, his heir, Octavian, swiftly picked up the mantle to establish total power as emperor in 27 BCE. An emperor would rule Rome until 476 CE.

Who was involved?

Lucius Sulla

139 BCE – 78 BCE

Upon consolidating power in 82 BCE, Sulla ruled as a dictator, purging many elected officials and stripping others of power.

Julius Caesar

100 BCE – 44 BCE

After crushing the remains of Pompey's men at the Battle of Munda, Caesar took control of Rome, eventually becoming dictator.

Emperor Augustus

63 BCE – 14 CE

Victory over Mark Antony at Actium allowed Octavian to cement his grip on power and later become the first emperor of Rome.

15 MARCH 44 BCE

Julius Caesar, having recently proclaimed himself dictator for life, is stabbed to death by a host of senators.

16 JANUARY 27 BCE

Caesar's heir becomes Emperor Caesar Augustus of Rome, having dispatched Mark Antony's forces four years earlier in the Final War of the Roman Republic.

The rise of the Roman Empire

How Rome built its empire, negotiating or seizing the largest population of any unified political entity in the West

The expansion of Rome

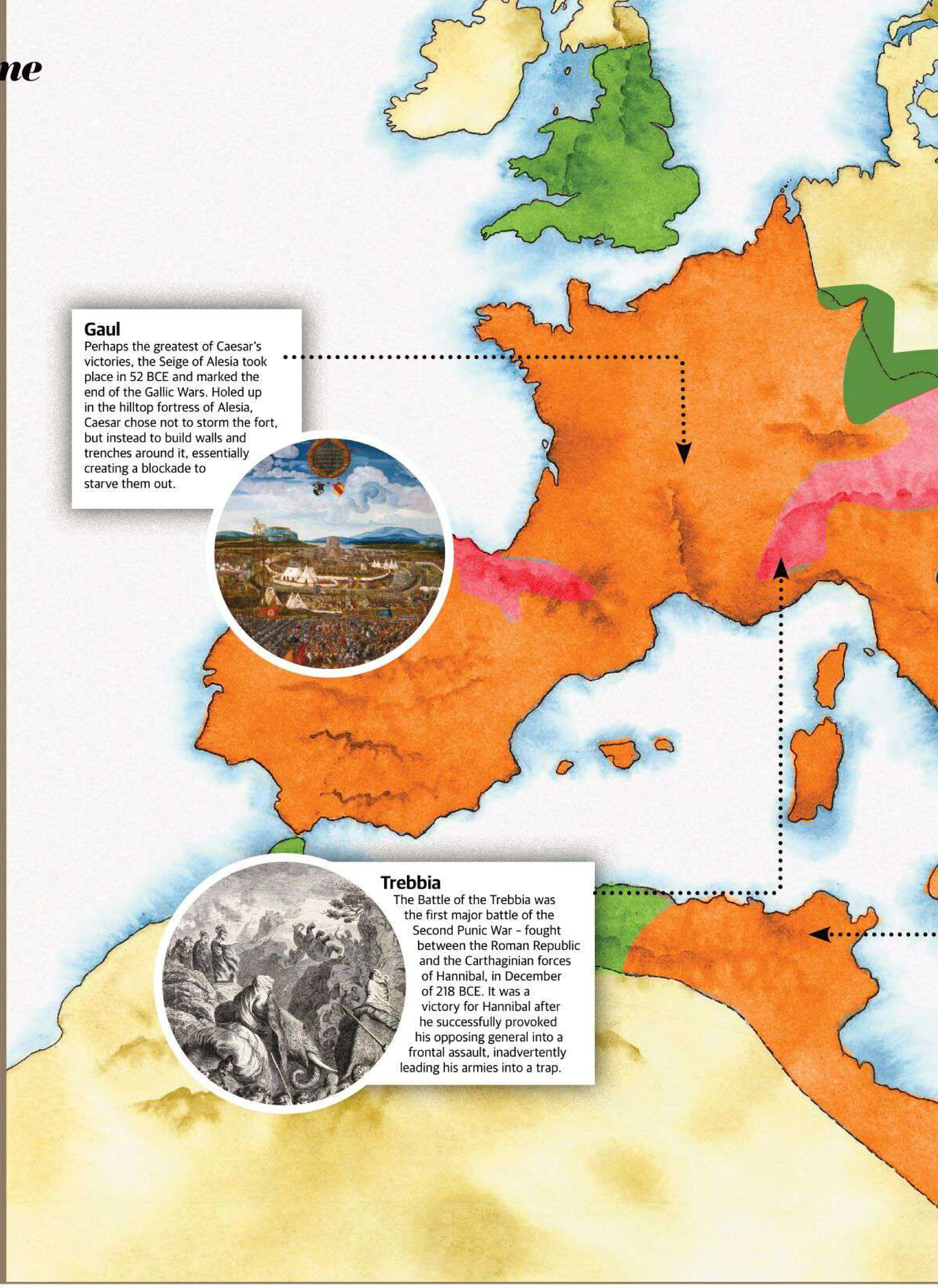
How the nation came, saw and conquered more and more territory as the centuries went on

5TH CENTURY BCE	ITALIAN PENINSULA
4TH CENTURY BCE	SUDAN
4TH CENTURY BCE	TUNISIA
4TH CENTURY BCE	MOROCCO
4TH CENTURY BCE	SOUTHERN FRANCE
4TH CENTURY BCE	SPAIN
1ST CENTURY BCE	NORTHERN FRANCE
1ST CENTURY BCE	GREECE
1ST CENTURY BCE	TURKEY
1ST CENTURY BCE	EGYPT
1ST CENTURY CE	BRITAIN
2ND CENTURY CE	DACIA (ROMANIA)
2ND CENTURY CE	ARMENIA
2ND CENTURY CE	THRACE (BULGARIA)

🟧 *Roman Republic territories up to the death of Caesar (44 BCE)*

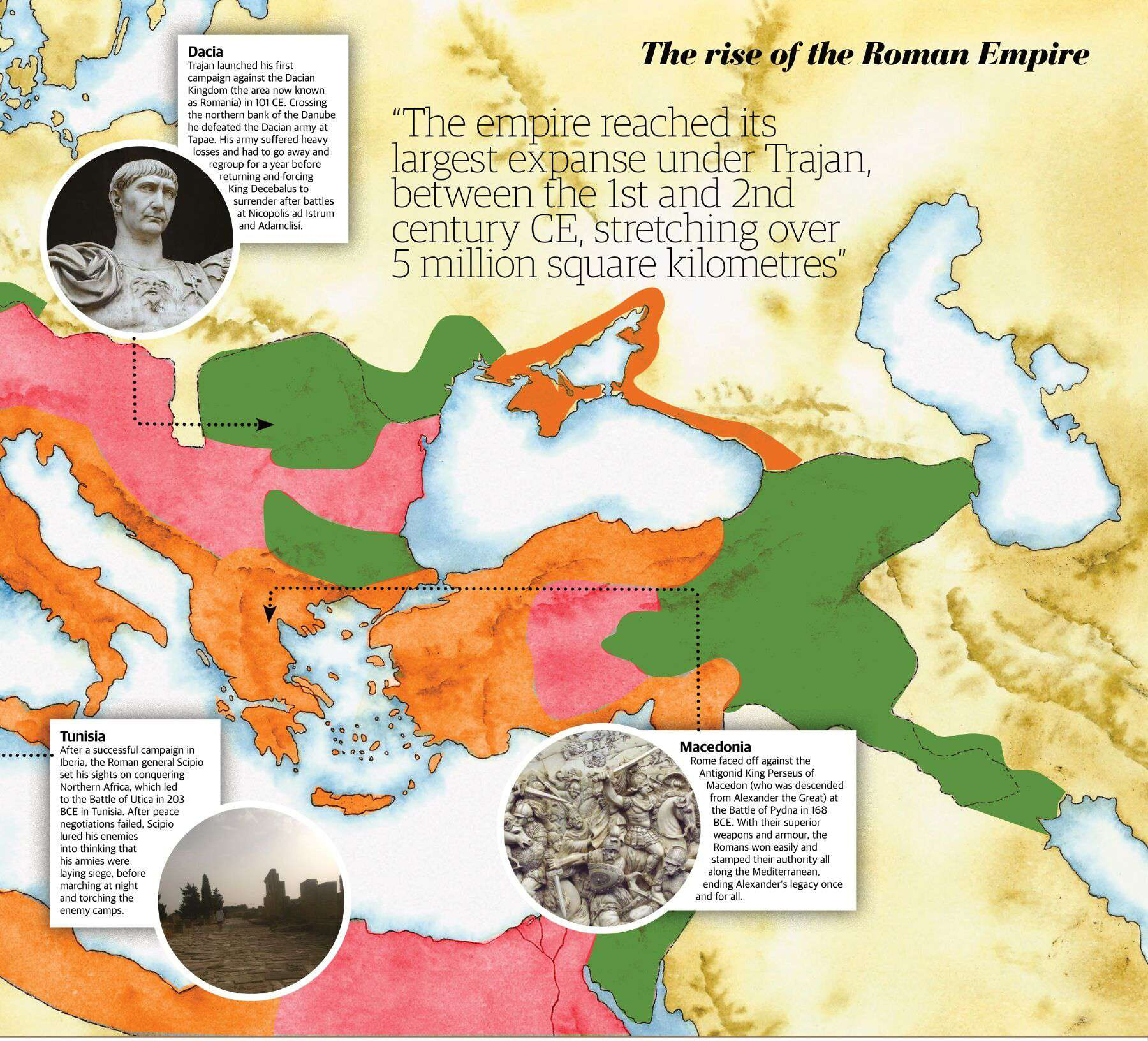
🟥 *Additional Roman Empire territories up to the death of Augustus (14 CE)*

🟩 *Additional Roman Empire territories up to the death of Trajan (117 CE)*



Gaul
Perhaps the greatest of Caesar's victories, the Seige of Alesia took place in 52 BCE and marked the end of the Gallic Wars. Holed up in the hilltop fortress of Alesia, Caesar chose not to storm the fort, but instead to build walls and trenches around it, essentially creating a blockade to starve them out.

Trebbia
The Battle of the Trebbia was the first major battle of the Second Punic War – fought between the Roman Republic and the Carthaginian forces of Hannibal, in December of 218 BCE. It was a victory for Hannibal after he successfully provoked his opposing general into a frontal assault, inadvertently leading his armies into a trap.



“The empire reached its largest expanse under Trajan, between the 1st and 2nd century CE, stretching over 5 million square kilometres”

Dacia
Trajan launched his first campaign against the Dacian Kingdom (the area now known as Romania) in 101 CE. Crossing the northern bank of the Danube he defeated the Dacian army at Tapae. His army suffered heavy losses and had to go away and regroup for a year before returning and forcing King Decebalus to surrender after battles at Nicopolis ad Istrum and Adamclisi.

Tunisia
After a successful campaign in Iberia, the Roman general Scipio set his sights on conquering Northern Africa, which led to the Battle of Utica in 203 BCE in Tunisia. After peace negotiations failed, Scipio lured his enemies into thinking that his armies were laying siege, before marching at night and torching the enemy camps.

Macedonia
Rome faced off against the Antigonid King Perseus of Macedon (who was descended from Alexander the Great) at the Battle of Pydna in 168 BCE. With their superior weapons and armour, the Romans won easily and stamped their authority all along the Mediterranean, ending Alexander's legacy once and for all.

The Roman Empire was one of the largest empires in history, comprising of territories throughout Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. Expansion was mostly accomplished under the Republic (between 509 and 27 BCE), before the Roman Empire was established. During this period in time, Rome's control expanded from the immediate surroundings of the city to control most of the Mediterranean world through forming alliances or taking the territories by brute force. It wasn't long before the entire Italian peninsula was under the control of the Republic, and by the following century its overwhelming dominance had widened all the way to include North Africa, Spain and Southern France (Gaul).

By the end of the 1st century BCE, the Republic had expanded to include all of France, Greece and most of the Eastern Mediterranean. However, by that point civil wars were breaking out due to internal struggles, and the Republic's troubles culminated with the assassination of Julius Caesar - after which the Republic became an empire.

The exact date of the political transition is down to interpretation. Some put it at the point when Caesar was appointed “Dictator For Life” in 44 BCE, others when Mark Antony and Cleopatra were defeated at the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE. The most popular opinion, however, was that the Republic ended when Octavian was granted extraordinary powers by the Senate and adopted the prestigious title of Augustus in 27 BCE.

Although he gave birth to the Empire, its dominance in terms of land mass didn't expand a great deal during the reign of Augustus, and when he died in 14 CE, his contribution had mainly been administrative. Augustus' regime catalogued people and places within the Empire and displayed a detailed map of the known world to the public.

The Roman Empire reached its largest expanse under Trajan, in the 1st to 2nd centuries CE, stretching out over 5 million square kilometres and of the modern equivalent of 40 countries. Around 476 CE, the empire began to crumble. Although the eastern half continued to rule for another thousand years, the Roman Empire struggled to defend its borders and maintain its political grip on the Western world.

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Dining deities and spirits of the pantry

Gods, temples and household spirits; just what did religion look like to the Romans on a daily basis?

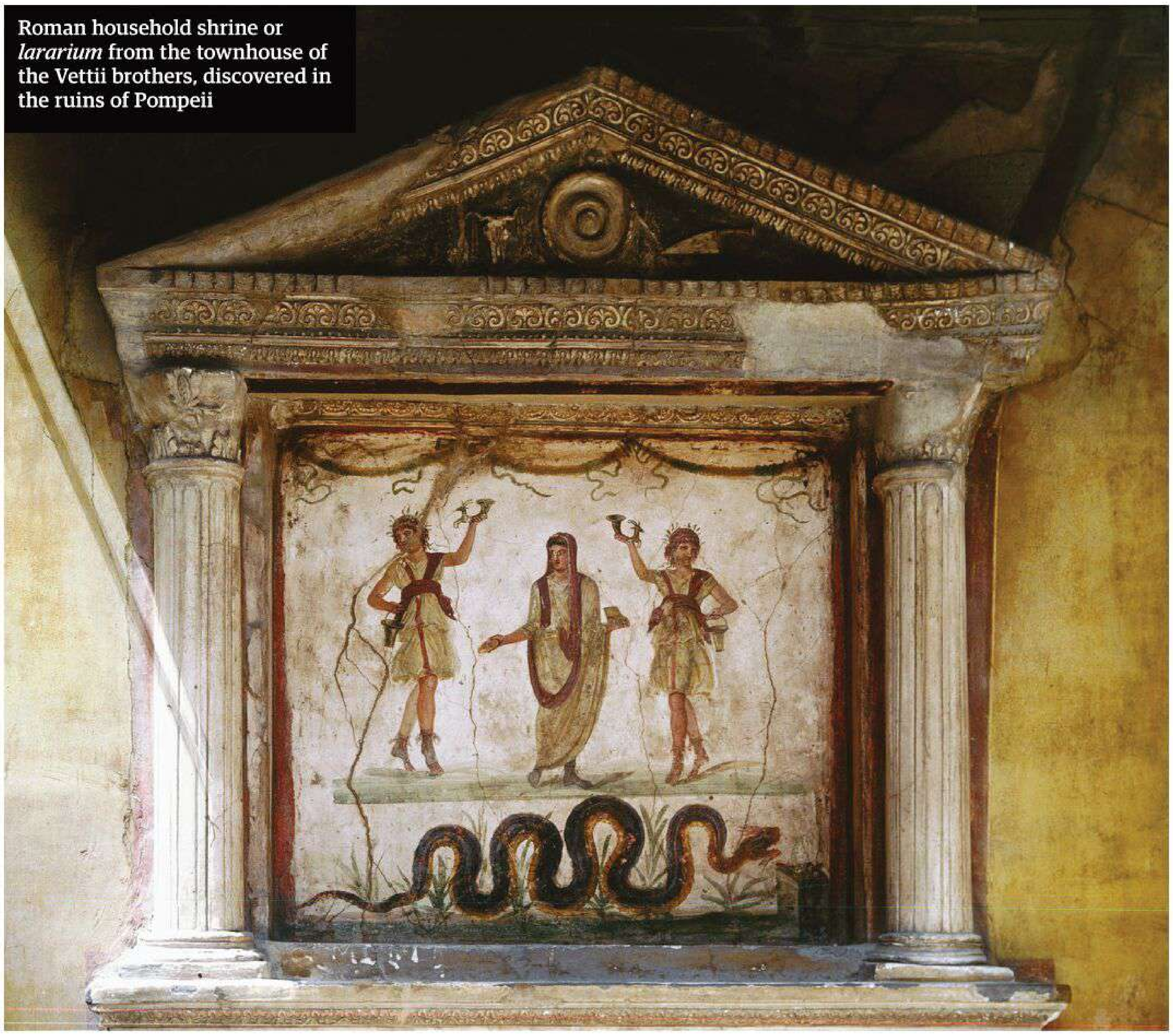
> Evidence of Roman religion still exists in Britain today: St Paul's Cathedral was built on the site of a Temple to Diana.

Strange as it may seem to us today, to the people of Ancient Rome religion was of utmost importance, forming an integral and vital part of every day life. The gods controlled everything that happened to an individual and the nation as a whole, with the actions of these often volatile deities used to explain events that occurred, both good and bad. It is hardly surprising therefore to find that a great deal of time and energy was spent on religious practice by the Romans: from slaves to the emperors and everyone in between. Indeed, Rome itself as a whole congratulated itself on high levels of collective piety, believing that this, coupled with a talent for appeasing the gods and keeping them on their side, were to thank for the great successes of the ever-expanding Empire. Being a polytheistic society from the start, there were a lot of gods and goddesses to be kept happy, and a lot of hard work needed to maintain the status quo, the consequences of angering the gods and losing favour was not something an individual or Rome could contemplate. Just how then did the Romans go about keeping this delicate balance?

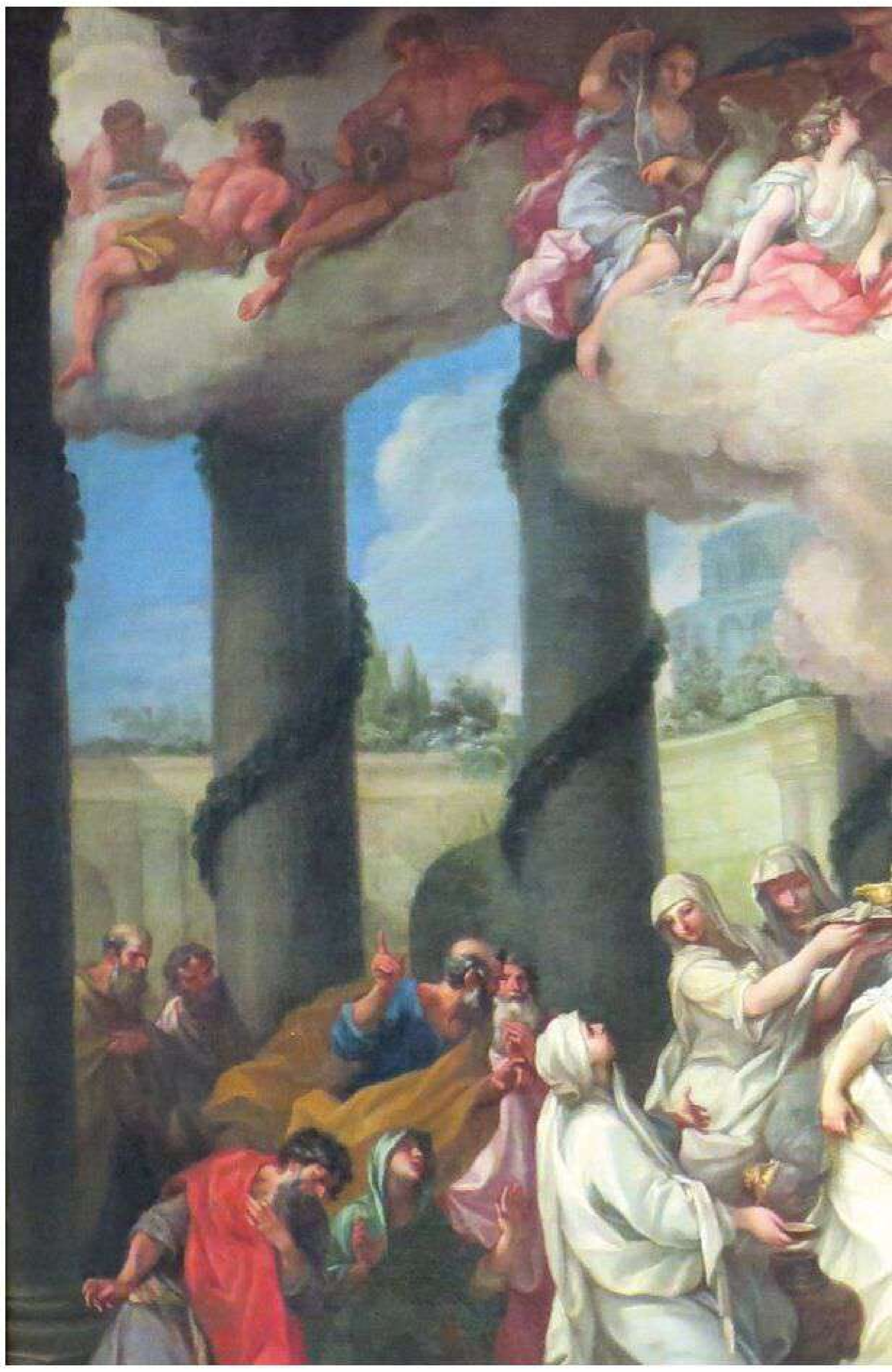
With religion pervading every aspect of daily life in Ancient Rome, it makes sense that religious observance began at that vital centre of Roman culture and experience: the family. Private worship within the home therefore was the foundation of all Roman religious life, the *pietas* or piety that contributed collectively to the well-being of the Empire having its roots in the private religious devotions of each family.

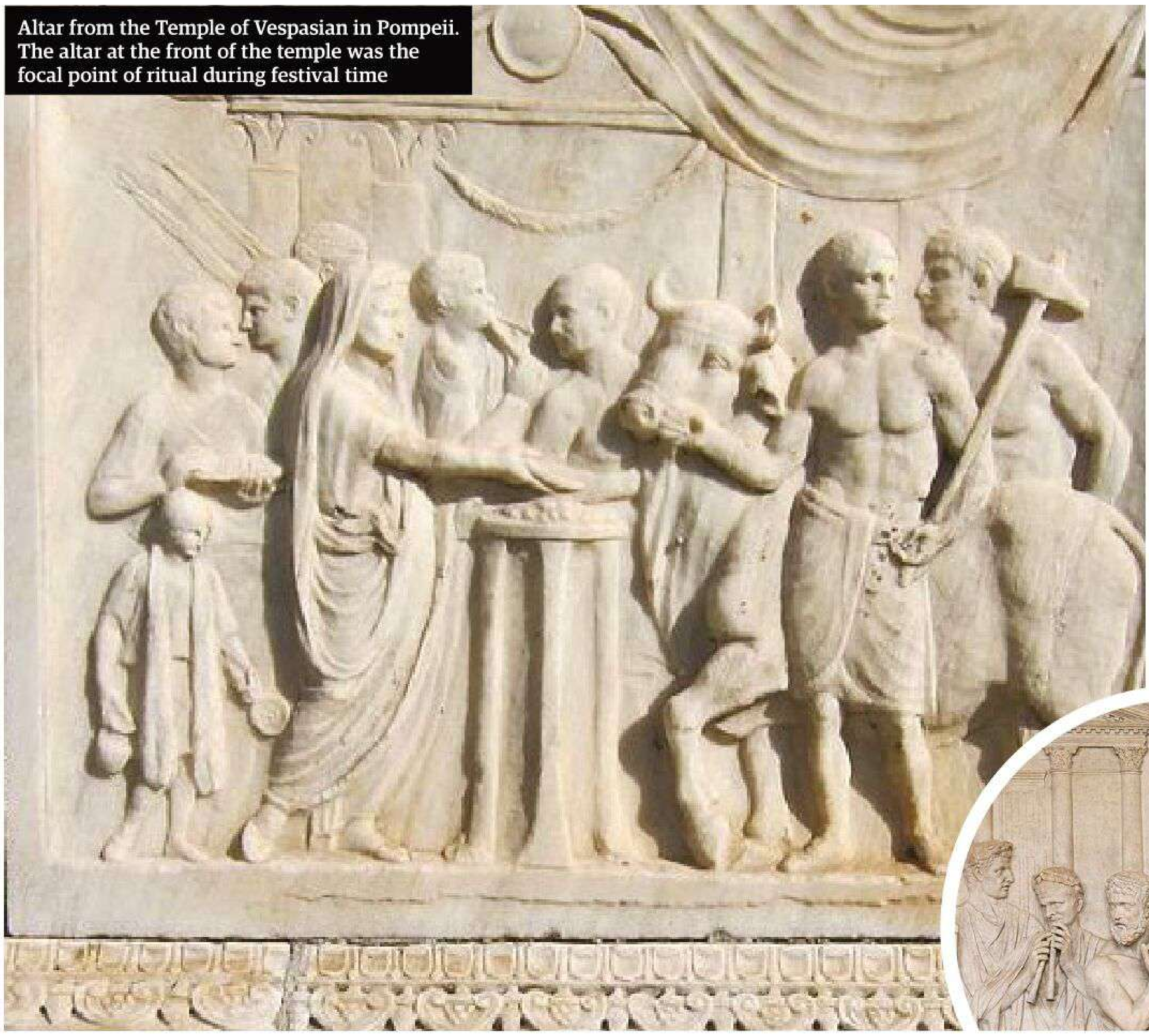
"Religious observance began at that vital centre of Roman culture and experience: the family"

The Temple of Saturn looms majestically over the forum in Rome, which some believe is the birthplace of western civilisation

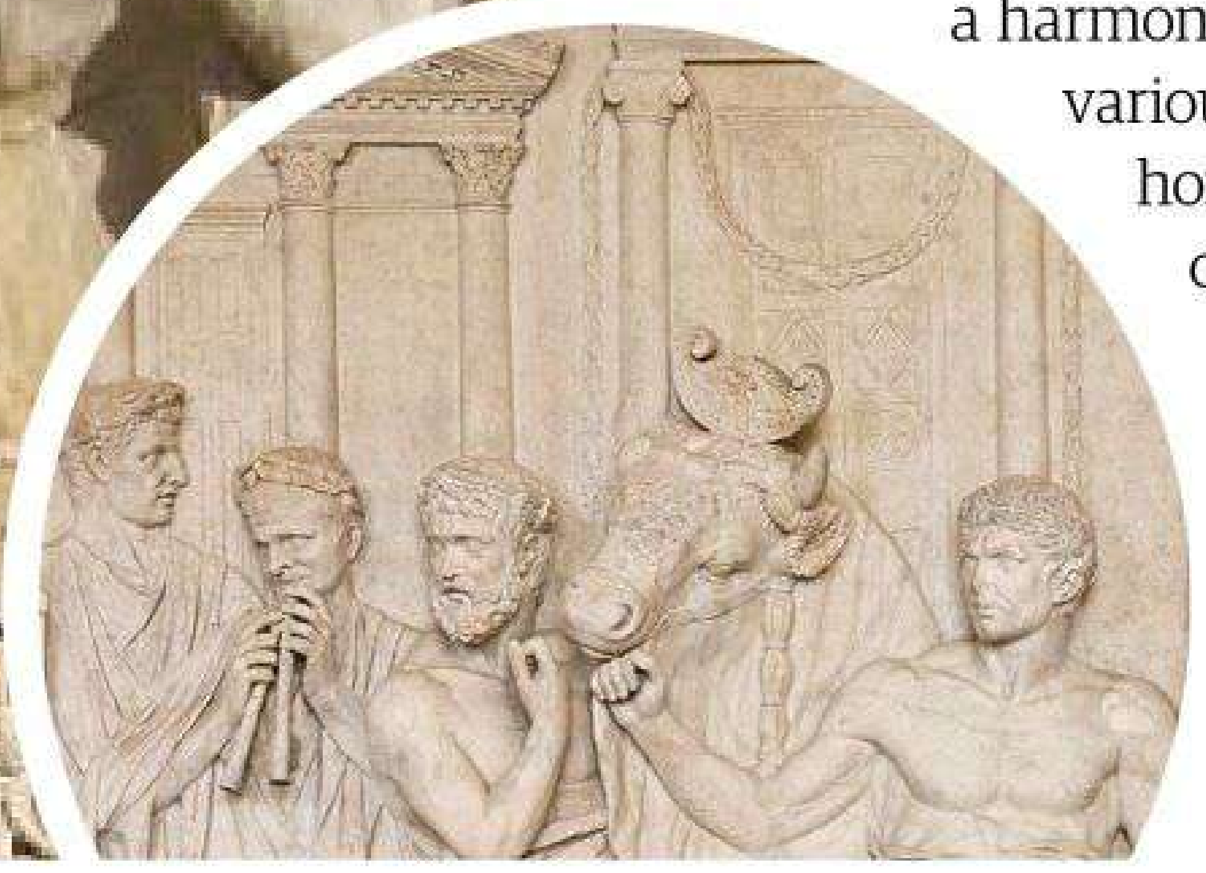


Roman household shrine or *lararium* from the townhouse of the Vettii brothers, discovered in the ruins of Pompeii



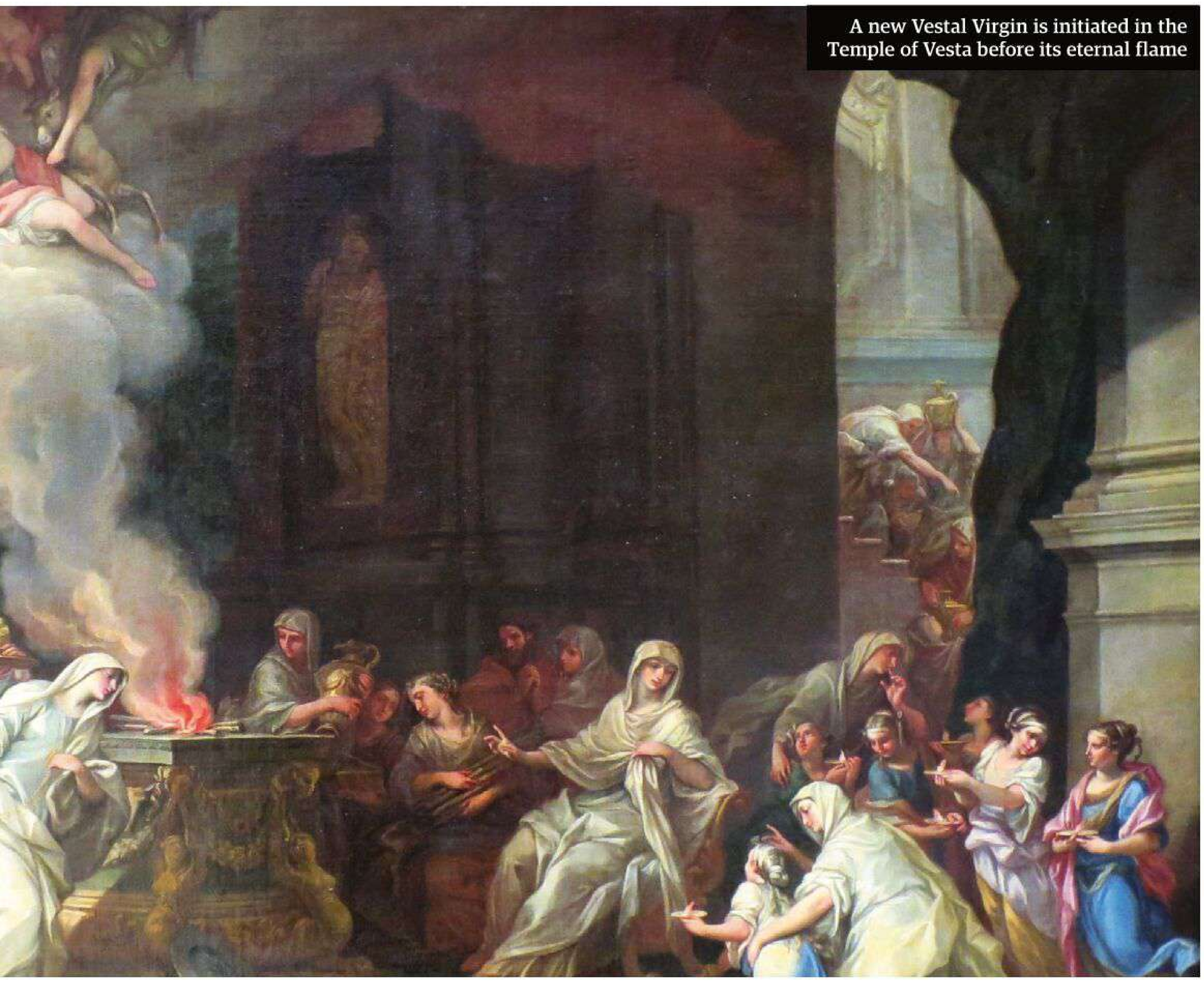


Altar from the Temple of Vespasian in Pompeii. The altar at the front of the temple was the focal point of ritual during festival time



Each household would accordingly have a shrine, dedicated to the gods that were of importance to those who lived there. The gods were far from distant figures to the Romans but were a very real and present feature in daily life. The head of the household was responsible for leading and guiding the religious observances that took place, performing the role of a priest within the home. Figures of the gods would be placed on the shrine and, on special occasions, sacred meals were held in the god's name. It was believed that the god actually attended and participated in the meal and was treated as a guest of honour, with a place setting and food set out for the deity in question.

It was not just the gods that influenced daily lives; especially in the private sphere of the family, it was the spirits of the place and the home that were of greatest importance. These spirits were intimately connected to the household and the family within, and remembering to give them due honour and acknowledgment was crucial to a harmonious existence. There were various types of spirits within a home: lares were the spirits of either the place or of ancestors who had died; figures of these would be housed within a cupboard in the home and it was believed that they ensured the family did well as long as they were kept happy,



A new Vestal Virgin is initiated in the Temple of Vesta before its eternal flame

often joining the family at mealtimes. *Penates* or *panes* (literally spirits of the pantry) were another vital spirit for the home, making sure that food remained good and plentiful all year round. There were also less positive spirits that could be present within the house such as the *lemures*; these were spiteful spirits known to torment a home, and it was thought that lares could become this type of spirit if they felt aggrieved that they had not been accorded the proper respect that was due to them.

The other form of observance that was of vital importance in Roman religious life was public religious ritual. This took many forms and, unlike the religious worship of the household, the public worship of the Empire was a far more controlled and formal affair, taking place in purpose-built temples that reflected the glory of Rome and her gods. Every town had at least one temple, while Rome itself had many, including the Temples of Jupiter, Vesta, Castor and Pollux, and Vespasian. Within the temples, the main 12 gods and goddesses of the Roman pantheon were worshipped, along with others who were considered important such as Janus, Flora and Pluto. The location of the temples further highlighted the importance of religious observance in Roman life, and they were found in places of prominence such as the forum as well as close to major roads.

Within each temple, the image of the god or goddess to whom it was dedicated was located within the main room, or cella. Some temples were used to worship multiple gods, and in this case each god would have a separate cella dedicated in his or her name, containing an image of the relevant deity. It was believed that the god to which the temple was dedicated actually dwelt within the temple, the cella being a living place for the god, rather than purely symbolic.

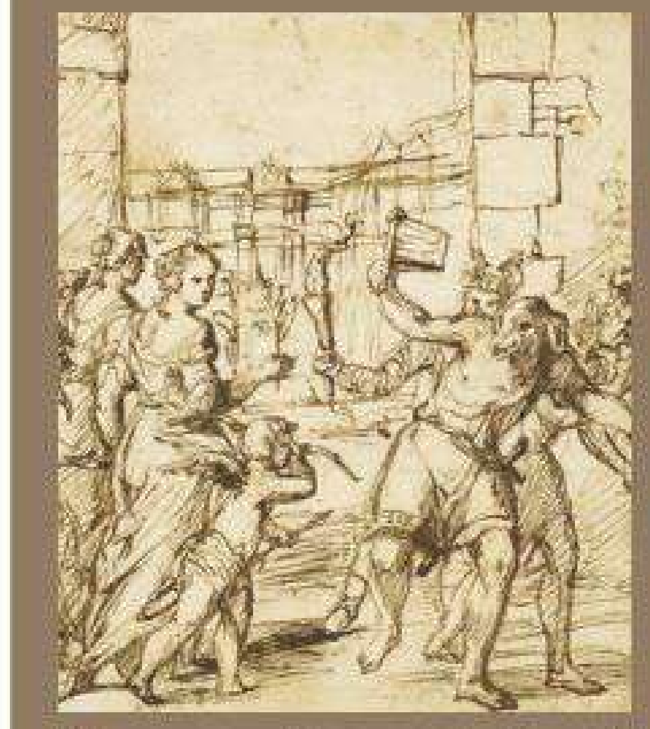
Depending on what a person's prayer was for would determine which temple or shrine they prayed at: for instance those who were praying regarding a matter related to war or battle would seek out a temple of Mars, while those

After the reign of Augustus, deceased emperors were given divine status and worshipped with other gods.

"The public worship of the Empire was a far more controlled and formal affair, taking place in purpose-built temples"

Time to celebrate

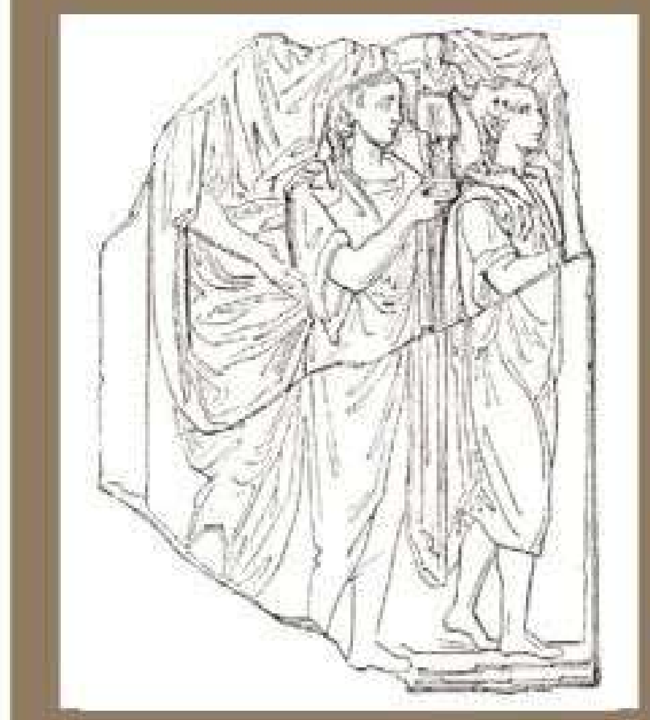
The people of Ancient Rome loved their festival days, these are just a selection of the many throughout the year



Lupercalia

A celebration of fertility

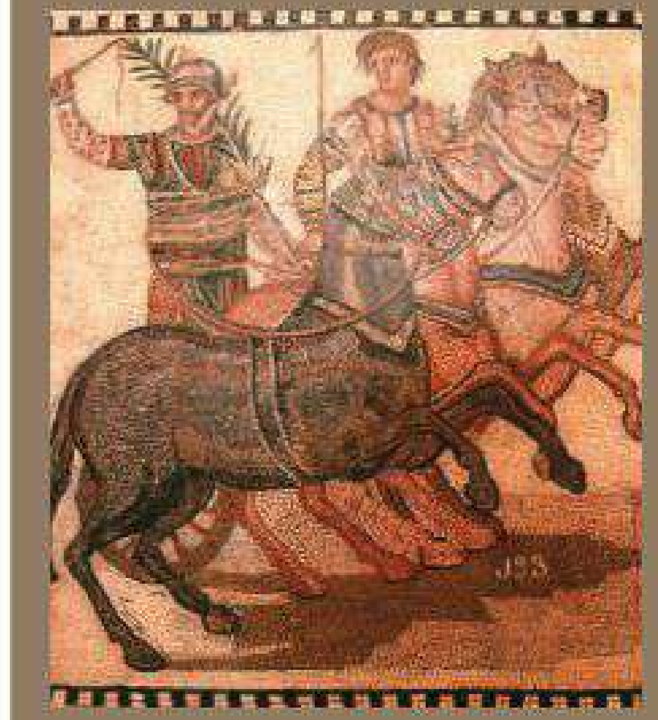
Held on 15 February. Dogs and goats were sacrificed in the cave of Romulus and Remus, and two teams of boys wearing goatskins were daubed with the blood. Then carrying goatskin strips the boys would run a set route, whipping spectators as they went. Women hoping to become pregnant would position themselves along the course so that they could be whipped as the runners passed.



Compitalia

To honour the *lares compitales*, household deities of the crossroads

One of the most important Roman festivals, it took place over three moveable days in late December or early January. Sacrifices were left at crossroads, and slaves could do what they wanted on those days. Wooden figures were placed on doorsteps to appease the lares and ask them to spare those within.



Consualia

Feast of Consus, the granary god

Taking place during August, the first fruits of the harvest would be sacrificed to Consus on his newly-cleaned alter, presided over by the Pontifex Maximus and the vestal virgins. Chariot races and games were held to honour Consus, and working animals were given the day off.

Feriae Ancillarum

Feast of the serving women

Said to be held on 7 July, this festival remembers when the Romans beat the Latin army through a serving girl named Philotis and a burning fig tree. In commemoration, the female slaves of Rome would dress in their finest clothes and attack freeborn men with fig tree branches.

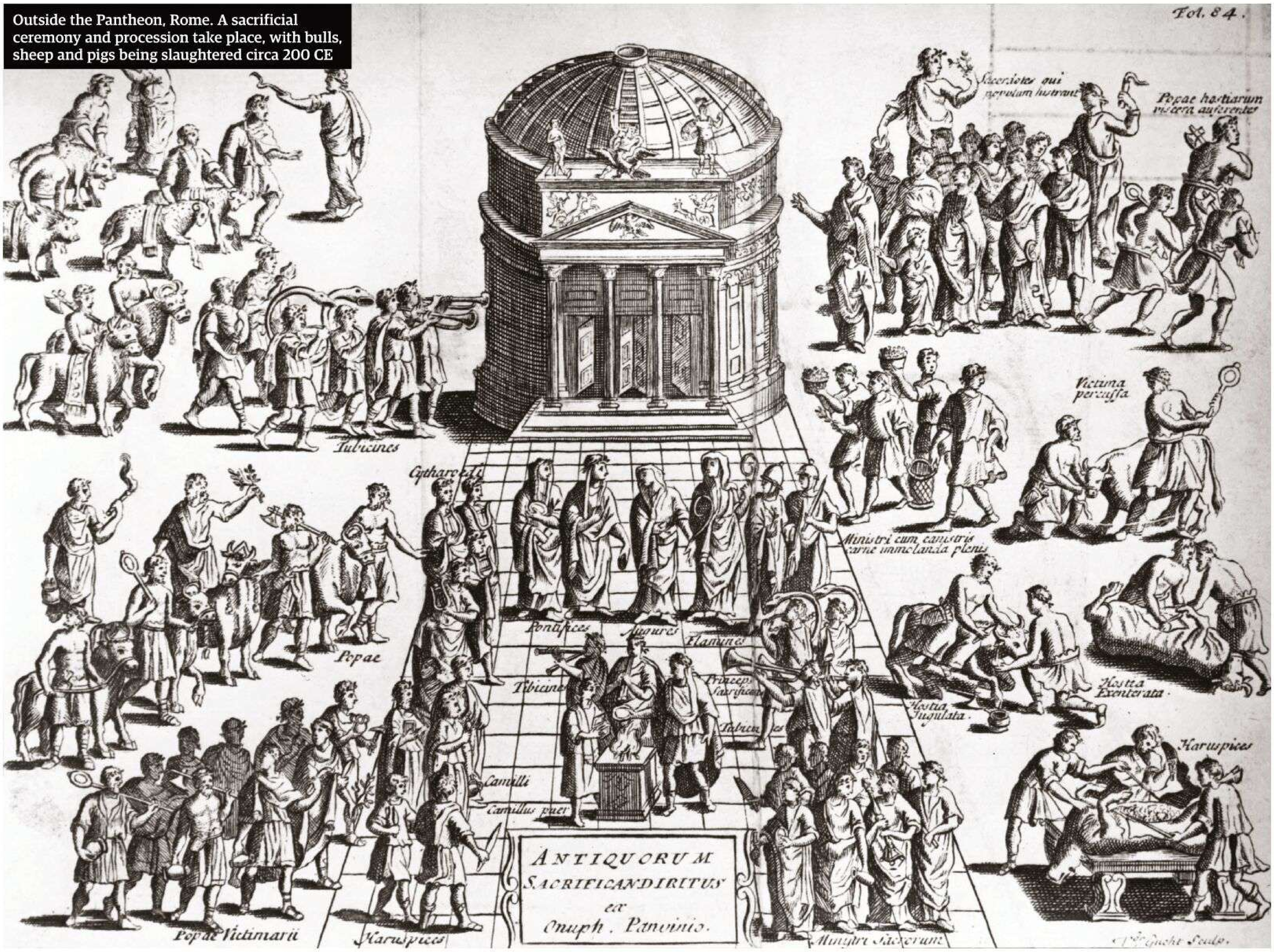
To make a sacrifice

Marble fragment showing the preparation of a sacrifice, dating from 2nd century CE

Sacrifice was an important part of Roman religious observance, in particular in the grand spectacle of public worship in Rome. Animals were the main choice, with different animals sacrificed to different gods; a heifer would suffice for Jupiter, but greedy Mars wanted a sheep, pig and an ox before he would consent to bargain with mortals.

The entire process of sacrifice was highly complex. After prayer and the sharing of wine and a long-involved ritual, the animal would be killed and skinned. Next the animal was opened and the entrails inspected and predictions made. Parts of the animal would be set aside for the gods, before the rest was cooked and fed to those in attendance.

Although often the case, the sacrifice did not necessarily have to involve the death of an animal; the only requirement was that it was a living thing, and so wine, cheese, fruit or even breadcrumbs could be used instead. A law had been passed in the 1st century BCE forbidding the sacrifice of humans, implying that they had been carried out before.



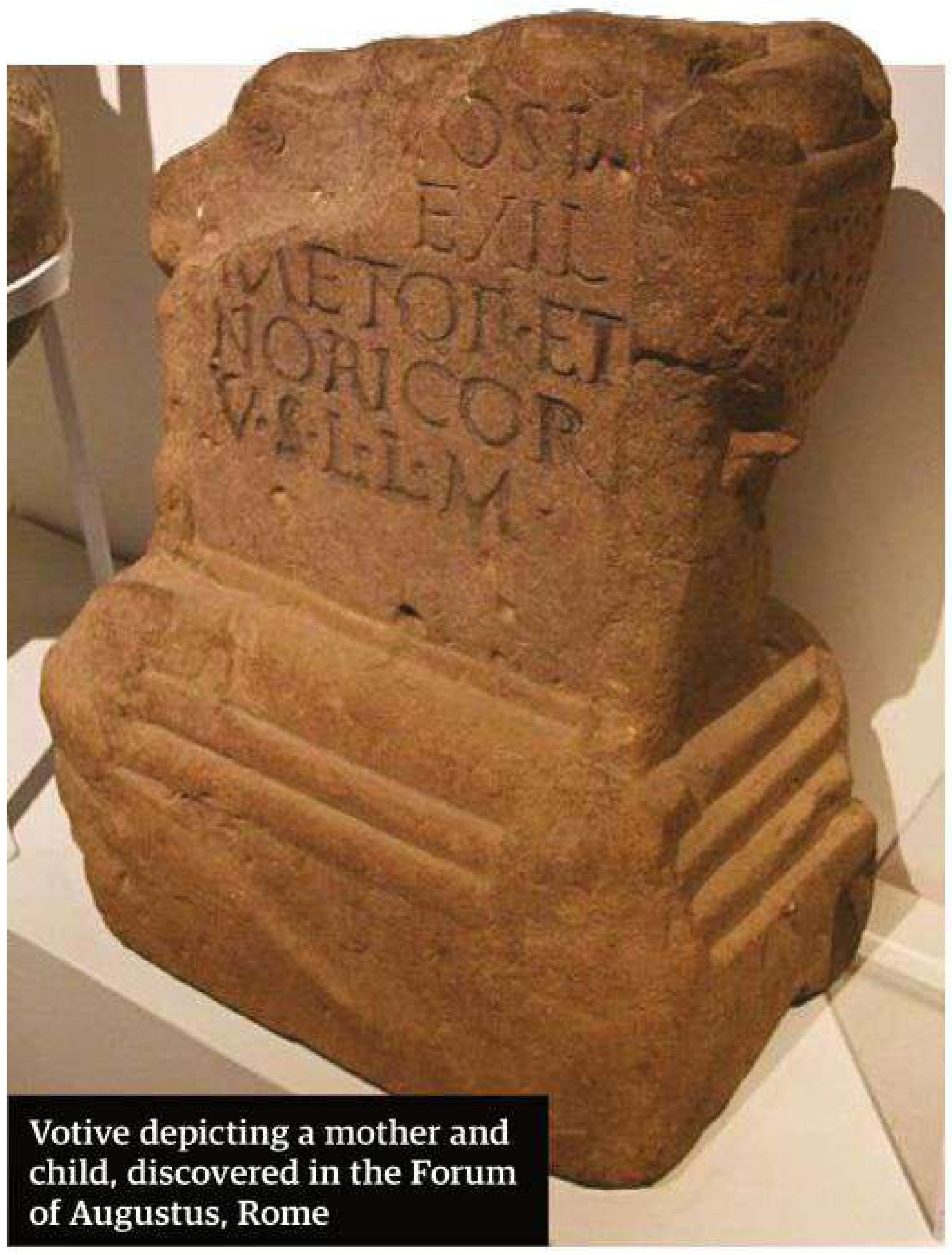
Outside the Pantheon, Rome. A sacrificial ceremony and procession take place, with bulls, sheep and pigs being slaughtered circa 200 CE

Tol. 84.
Sacerdotes qui populum lustrant
Popae hostiarum viscera auferentes
Tubicines
Cytharoedi
Victima percussa
Ministri cum canistris carne immolanda plenis
Pontifices
Augures
Flamines
Popae
Tibicines
Princeps Sacrificans
Tubicines
Hostia Iugulata.
Hostia Exenterata.
Haruspices
Camilli
Camillus puer
ANTIQUORUM SACRIFICANDI RITUS ex Onuph. Panvinio.
Popae Victimarii
Haruspices
Ministri Sacrorum
V.d. Gucht Sculp.

who were wanting help with love or affairs of the heart would go to one dedicated to Venus. Despite the grandiose setting of the temple, the religious ceremony and sacrifices actually occurred outside. The front of the temple building was emphasised with pillars and columns to reflect this, drawing attention to the focal point of the altar where the action took place.

> “Temples might be built as a thanksgiving to the gods after a triumph, or as a bargain to guarantee success”

Due to the vital importance of religious ritual and ceremony being conducted properly, the public religious life of Rome was carried out by the all-important priests. Priests had many roles; among them leading rituals and processions, conducting sacrifices, interpreting omens and declaring festival days. There were different types of priest who held different functions and responsibilities, and there were four major colleges of priests, the pontiffs being the most important and influential. The relationship between the Roman people and their gods was a complex one, but in essence it was a relationship built on a series of bargains or trades. The worshipper would ask for something from the gods, promising something in return if the gods did as he or she requested. To help sweeten matters further, offerings – perhaps of wine or food – or a sacrifice carried out in the god's name might be carried out to further encourage a favourable outcome. Prayer was very important, both in private and public worship, and ritual or sacrifice that did not come accompanied with prayer was not considered to be effective. Prayer alone, however, could and did achieve results.


Votive depicting a mother and child, discovered in the Forum of Augustus, Rome

Everyone took part in the religious life of the Empire, including those generally considered to be of lower social status such as slaves and women. In fact there were some ceremonies that only women could conduct, and Rome's vestal virgins remain famous in memory even today. Women did not perform animal sacrifice, and their role in public religious life was generally limited.

The Romans had many days of religious significance, and at some points in the Empire's history there were more sacred days within the calendar than there were of non-sacred days. Some of these lasted only a few hours, while others – such as the festival of Saturnalia – could last for almost an entire week. Each god had a day dedicated to him or her, too, and this day was also likely to be a public holiday.

As well as the “official” religion of the Empire, there were several other cults and religions that existed alongside it. One of these was the Imperial cult that worshipped and deified the person of the emperor. There were also “mystery” religions that were imported from areas conquered by the Romans, such as the cult of Mithras. Of course Christianity was the most influential and prevalent of these “foreign” cults and religions, becoming the official state religion of the Empire in the 4th century CE and bringing to an end, formally at least, the practice of the old religion of the gods that the Roman's once worshipped.

Religion permeated every aspect of Roman life, and the dealing with of wrong-doers was no exception. Treason was considered a threat and direct affront to order, both social and religious, and was therefore dealt with as a religious crime. If found guilty, the perpetrator risked execution, often in the form of a sacrifice to Ceres or another underworld god. Treason could take many forms, and those who moved boundary stones, defrauded clients, committed arson or parricide – the killing of one's parent – were guilty of not just a crime but affronting the gods.

Keeping your word was also of great importance, and an oath was considered an agreement between the oath swearer and the god or gods that he swore to. If the oath was broken, this was seen as a very serious offence, the person placing themselves in effect outside of society and therefore at the mercy of the gods. If someone killed the oathbreaker they were not considered to be guilty of murder – instead it was interpreted as the gods punishing the person for breaking the contract that was made with them.

Sacred law maintained that both slaves who turned to theft and men who gave false testimony were to be thrown from the Tarpeian Rock. The picking of crops not your own under cover of night was punishable by death and sacrifice to Ceres. Priests were not immune, and those who did not fulfil their duties and were deemed inferior were liable to punishment by the pontiffs.

Priests were essential to the religious well-being of the Empire. Here are some of the many types

Statue of Mars, god of war: festivals dedicated to this god dominated the month of March that took his name

Rex Sacorum

Their original purpose was to replace the religious role previously held by the kings of Rome with the dawning of the Roman Republic, the word *rex* a reminder of the origin of their position. These priests could not hold public office and was barred from sitting in the senate in an attempt to curtail their power. They were later responsible for declaring the many religious festivals on the calendar.

Quindecimviri

The Quindecemviri were charged with the important task of guarding the Sibylline Books; these books contained prophecies concerning the fate of the Empire and they were consulted at important moments to see what needed to be done. They were also responsible for amalgamating any gods of foreign origin adopted by Rome.

Pontiffs

Overseen by the Pontifex Maximus, a position that in time became that of Pope, this group carried out the public ritual and ceremony involved on a day-to-day basis. They were the general overseers of public rites. The most illustrious of the four main colleges of priests, they also appointed members to the other priesthoods.

Augurs

Responsible for divination through interpreting the flight paths of birds, Augurs were also charged with declaring whether the outcome of an action would be positive or doomed to failure in all aspects of life, from battle to trade to religion. The Augurs also interpreted the entrails of sacrificed animals and were responsible for determining the wishes of the gods so people could act accordingly.

Flamines

These priests were dedicated to a particular god or goddess, and were responsible for taking care of the temple of the god they represented. The most important of the *flamines* were those of Jupiter (*flamen dialis*), Mars, (*flamen martialis*) and Quirinus (*flamen quirinalis*). Believed by some to be the oldest of the Roman priests, the *flamines* tended to hold their post for life.

© Getty, Wiki

POMPEI
MAGN

Caesar, his rise to power and his assassination within the Senate, was one of many factors that led to the Senate's eventual loss of power

Birth of the Senate

From its humblest beginnings to its clashes with the many Roman Emperors of history, the Senate was the resolute voice of the people

For over a thousand years, the Romans reigned as one of the most powerful nation states in history. It was a time of incredible military might and expanding borders, where the eagle sigil was raised across the world to signal a new era of colonial expansion. But it wasn't just abroad that the Romans made their mark - in the Senate, Rome had its own unique form of governance. A parliament of learned men where every member had the right to express their thoughts in debate, where the laws of the land were made and the future of the nation decided.

Rather fittingly for an institution so synonymous with Rome itself, the Senate is believed to have been first established around the same time King Romulus established the Roman Kingdom in 753 BCE. Romulus chose Rome as his seat of power and with it he created a new state office that would take care of the dull, repetitive reality of legislation and general political infrastructure. This was, in its very earliest form, the beginnings of the Senate and even here, in Rome's youngest days, the basic elements that would define it were already forming.

Rather than selecting ordinary citizens (or plebeians as they were known), representatives were instead selected from the most influential families from around the region. Romulus originally selected 100 members, but that number soon swelled to a regular figure of 300 as more individuals of note were added. These individuals were "patres" or patriarchs, the most important male in a noble clan or "gens". These patricians, and the Senate itself, did not have the power it would reflect in later centuries (it was very much an advisory council to the monarchy at this stage), but it was still a platform for "the people" to be represented to the ears of the king.

The Senate of the Roman Kingdom served three main purposes in the years prior to the formation of the Republic. Firstly, it served in an advisory capacity to the monarch. Secondly, it functioned as legislative body for the people of the kingdom and finally, it existed as the ultimate repository of executive power. The king could, by all means, ignore the counsel offered by the Senate but as the years passed, the prestige of the Senate grew and it became increasingly difficult for a monarch to simply discard the word of such an important office. It was the beginning of a tumultuous pattern that would follow the Senate through history, both to its advantage and its error…

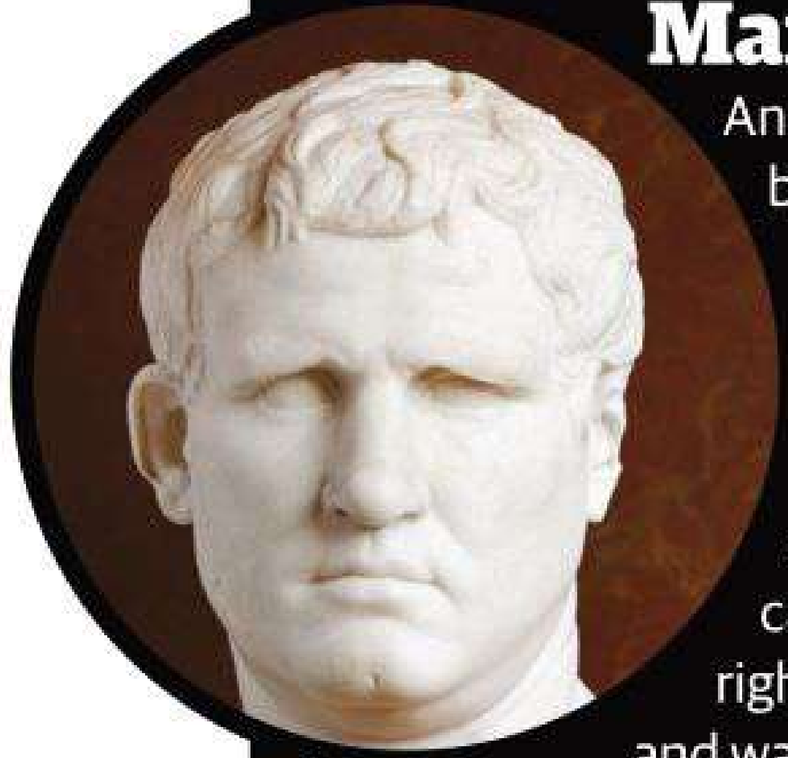
Under Caesar's rule, the Senate could contain up to an astonishing 900 members.

Part of the Senate's influence, especially among the people, finds its source in the deeply patriarchal nature of Roman society at this time. The elders of the realm were held in the highest regard and this created a considerable seat of power. Even the crown was subservient to the will of the Senate in some regards - for instance, a new king (selected by the people and Senate) could only ascend to the throne with the prior approval of the Senate. In the interim, all executive power would reside within the Senate, making it the most powerful seat in the land.

A total of seven kings ruled over the course of the Roman Kingdom, and it would be the seventh that would change the realm, and the crown's relationship with the Senate, forever. Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, or Tarquin the Proud as he's been sometimes referred, was your typical tyrant. A man who murdered his way to power and abused its potency at every turn. He was

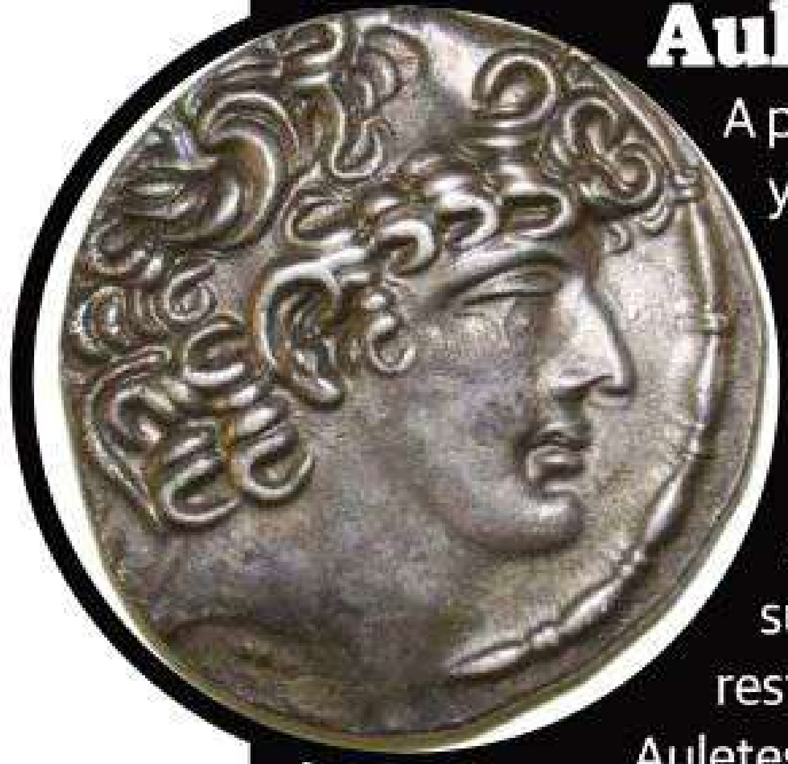
Top five famous senators

It wasn't just the emperors who were the talk of the town – the Senate also produced some of the Romans' most interesting characters



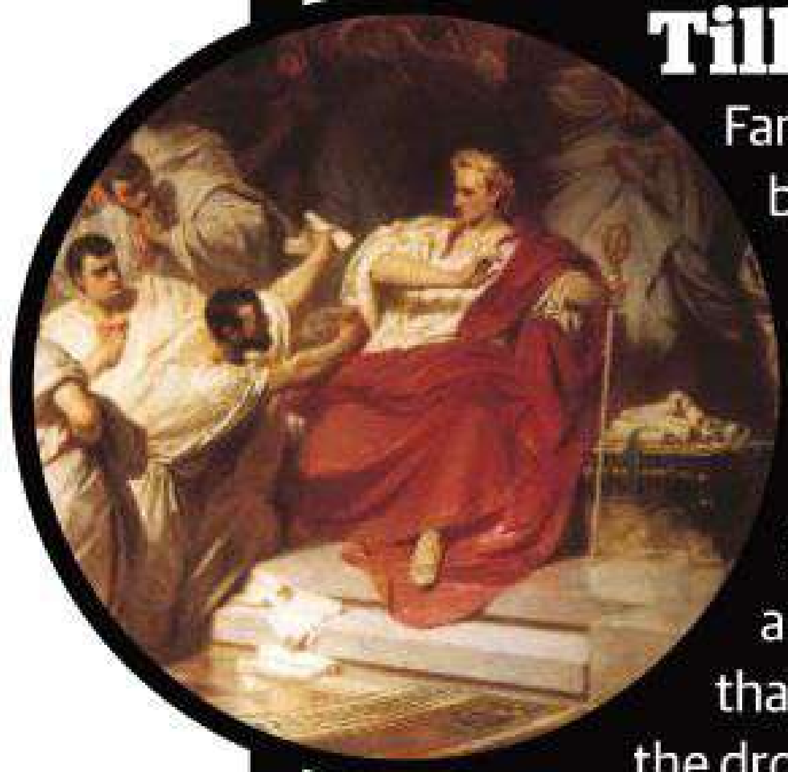
Marcius Agrippa

An unusual senator, Marcius Agrippa began life as a slave, working as a beautician. He flitted between a number of different roles, before pretending to be a man of higher rank (he was found out and banished). He was eventually called back, granted the same rights as a man who was born free and was elevated to senatorial rank.



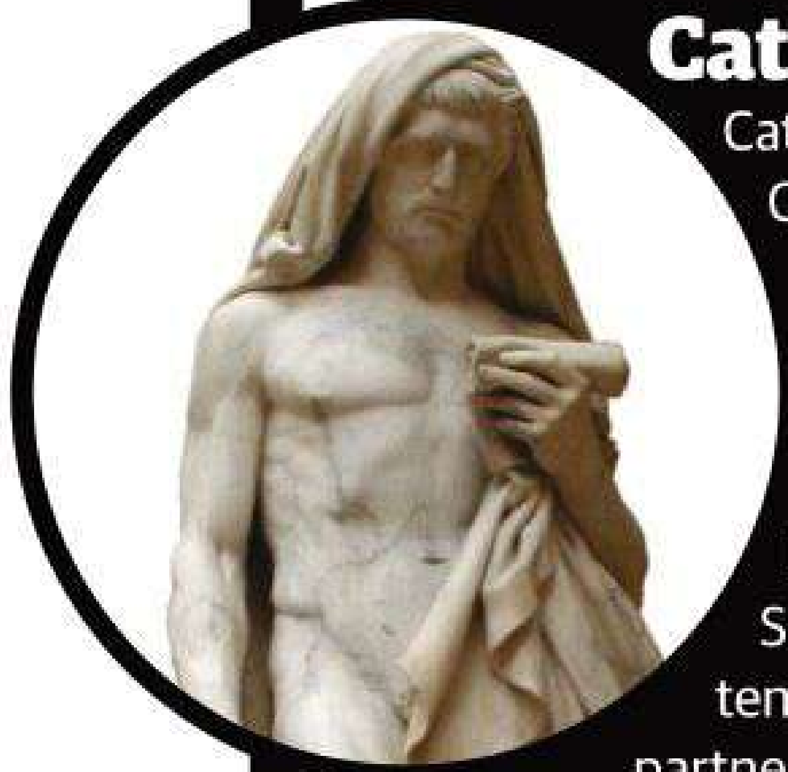
Aulus Gabinius

A prominent figure in the twilight years of the Republic, Aulus Gabinius was a statesman, a general and a supporter of Pompey. As well as a senator, he had a storied history in the army and was the general who successfully helped Marc Antony restore Egyptian pharaoh Ptolemy XII Auletes to his throne.



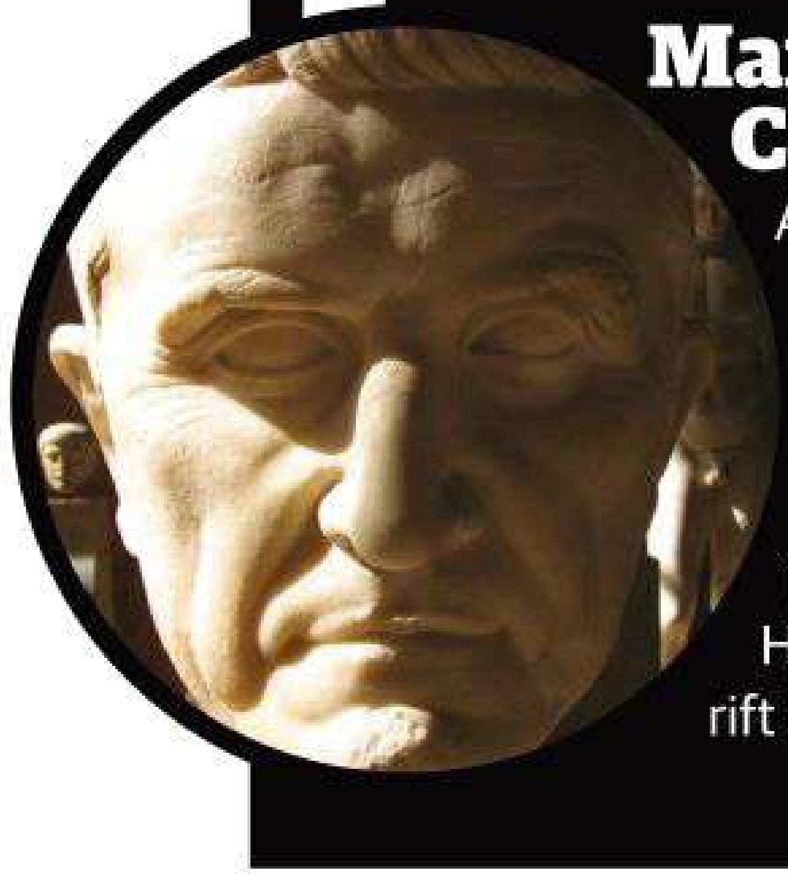
Tillius Cimber

Famously one of the men who betrayed and assassinated Julius Caesar, Tillius Cimber was initially one of Caesar's strongest supporters, but the political games he was playing with the Senate's power proved too much and so he served as the distraction that enabled Caesar's assassins to get the drop on him.



Cato the Younger

Cato the Younger or Marcus Porcius Cato Uticensis as he was also known, was a Roman senator famed for his stoic nature and iron-clad morale centre. He refused to accept bribes and was known as a great orator within the Senate. Remembered as stubborn, tenacious and a vocal sparring partner of Julius Caesar's.



Marcus Licinius Crassus

A Roman statesman and general, Marcus Licinius Crassus was instrumental in the transition the Romans made from a Republic to an Empire. He's also rather famous for his incredible wealth. His death would go on to cause a rift between Caesar and Pompey.

warring constantly, and coupled with an obsession with building new structures, his exploits were squeezing the kingdom's coffers dry. His own people eventually ousted him when news that his son, Sextus Tarquinius, had raped a noblewoman. The act was used as a means to oust the royal family, with the nobility, the people and the army all supporting the king's exile.

After the abolition of the monarchy in 509 BCE, the Senate's position as an advisory council continued. Its size swelled to between 300 and 500 members, with each one being a patrician that would serve on the Senate for life. The Republic no longer wished to be victim to the will of a single man, so it was decided that the position of "consul" would be created – a total of two consuls (elected for one year at a time by the people) would serve jointly. The consuls could also call the Senate at any time, but these executive powers were rarely abused in the Republic's early years.

Over time, the consolidation of power in the Senate began to grow. The consuls were in charge of leading the armies and serving as the face of the Republic, but the Senate was largely in charge of running everything else in the realm. The Senate dealt with finance, creating and amending laws, overseeing trials of those that broke the law and debated the topics and grievances of the people in a forum where any voice could be heard. It was during this time we started to see plebeians entering the Senate – those who were not of noble stock – however, it took a great deal of time for the highest of ranks to be opened up to them.

The relationship between the Senate and the consuls also became more formal during the Republic era – when the Senate wished to pass its advice to the consuls it would present an official degree known as a *senatus consultum*. Again, these were not orders but they did hold weight and even the foolhardiest of consuls often heeded the counsel regardless. Especially so when these decrees concerned the popular Roman practice of warfare – a magistrate would have to justify any military action beyond the defence of an invading force to the Senate, which aimed to deter any warmongering consuls from seeking vainglory on a needless battlefield.

Upholding the law of the land also layered the Senate with a cast iron sense of morality regarding its own practices. For instance, a serving senator could not involve themselves in any form of banking or public contract and were forbidden from commissioning or possessing a ship large enough to be used in foreign commerce. In fact, a senator could not even leave Italy, such was the importance of their presence in Rome.

More interestingly, a senator was not paid. It was a factor linked with the wealthy, high-born origins of the Senate's earliest members. One was simply expected to be from a rich and monied background before entering the Senate, and it was a factor that often put off plebeians who wanted to have a voice within the forum but simply didn't have the financial foundations to support themselves if successfully elected.

As such, the Senate required a position within itself in which to enforce the moral codes of its own members. So it was here, during the days of the Republic, that we saw the creation of the "censor". A censor was the political police of the Senate, and

The role of the senator differed over the centuries, but the Senate was always in an advisory capacity to the king/consuls/emperor these figures were often some of the most well respected and most revered members of the forum – characters not averse to punishing their own for breaking the Senate's codes of conduct. Crimes often punished by censors included corruption, abuse of capital punishment and the disregard of another member's rights. These were usually fines, but severe cases could lead to a member being impeached (which meant they were expelled outright from the Senate).

The creation of the censor also placed new rules on those applying to join the Senate. Those with prior criminal convictions or those that had previously fought as a gladiator and won their freedom were not often considered (mainly because neither background often left a man with much financial backing). In fact, by 123 BCE, the law *Lex Acilia repetundarum* was passed, making it illegal for any new prospective senator to have been convicted of a prior crime. These laws only became more numerous as the Republic grew on, with public corruption forcing the Senate to be ever more vigilant when conducting these screenings.

> The Senate retained a level of power all the way through the Byzantine Empire in the 6th century.

When the Senate convened, it was usually conducted within the walls of the city (known collectively as the *pomerium*), and official rules stated that the Senate could not meet any further than one mile from the city's boundaries. Meetings outside the pomerium weren't common, but they did happen. Most of these were political in nature, including choosing to meet a new nation's emissary outside of the city in order to avoid revealing too much about Rome's internal defences.

In the last two centuries, however, the powerbase of the Senate began to transform. The relationship between the consuls and the Senate had degraded to a certain extent as the official state office began to assume more roles (and thus accumulate more collective power) than the magistrates themselves. The Senate could now veto any decision made by the consuls, which would see senators raise their concerns vocally or with a show of hands, a power which greatly troubled those who were in the position of a consul.

Over time, this saw the Senate evolve into an autonomous, self-governing entity that largely ignored the whim of the annual magistrates. During this period, the Senate grew to the height of its Republican power and by 312 BCE, the power to select new consuls passed exclusively to the Senate. The reforms continued and in 81 BCE, general and senator Sulla successfully changed laws so the number of quaestors (the lowest rank of magistrate in the Senate) increased to 20, in addition to including all former quaestors back into the Senate by default.

Its position on foreign policy also changed during the final years of the Republic. Initially loosely involved in such matters, the Senate eventually decreed that meetings with foreign dignitaries and

What was a debate in the Senate like?

The Senate was designed to be the most democratic representation of Roman governance, so debates were long and took into account every member's thoughts on a particular matter. It would begin by a presiding magistrate introducing a *relatio* (matter for discussion) and then opening the floor to debate. Every single one would be called forward to express their opinions before their fellow senators.

The order with which members were called forward was very specific and was based upon their role. The order was as follows: Consules designati, Princeps senatus, Dictatorii, Censores designati, Censorii, Consulares, Praetores designati, Praetorii, Aediles curules designati, Aedilicii curules, Aediles plebis, designati, Aedilicii plebis, Tribuni plebis designati, Tribunicii plebis, Quaestores designati, Quaestorii and Privati.

Once each senator had expressed their opinion on the relatio, the presiding magistrate had to express theirs (or risk a fine). Expressing an opinion, however long or short, was known as a *sententia* and was a vital part of the Senate's open floor of expression. A member could then respond to a sententia by vocalising their agreement or disagreement, or choose to sit next to them to show solidarity. It's not known just how much discretion a presiding magistrate would have to bring a debate to an end, but a meeting would need to be concluded before midnight.

The Forum remained a vital part of the Senate's political process, serving as a platform on which the issues of the day could be heard

Limitations of the Senate

The limitations in power endured by the Senate differed from the Republic to the Empire. During the Republic, the Senate existed alongside the consuls – however, the consuls had far more power than the Senate and could effectively do what they wanted. This did put the Senate at a disadvantage, but since consuls could only serve for two years at most (while the Senate remained permanent) many consuls were often wary of the Senate's power. It should be noted that the Senate actually had no executive power in its earliest days.

Towards the end of the Republic, the Senate's power exploded, but that power reduced rapidly under Imperial rule. Its control of everything from finance to judicial laws was limited as the emperors continued to consolidate power into their own position. The emperor could call and preside over a Senate meeting at will, he could pick members as he chose and was always the first person to speak in a debate.

Censors such as Appius Claudius were the men who ensured the Senate itself abided by a strict code of morale conduct

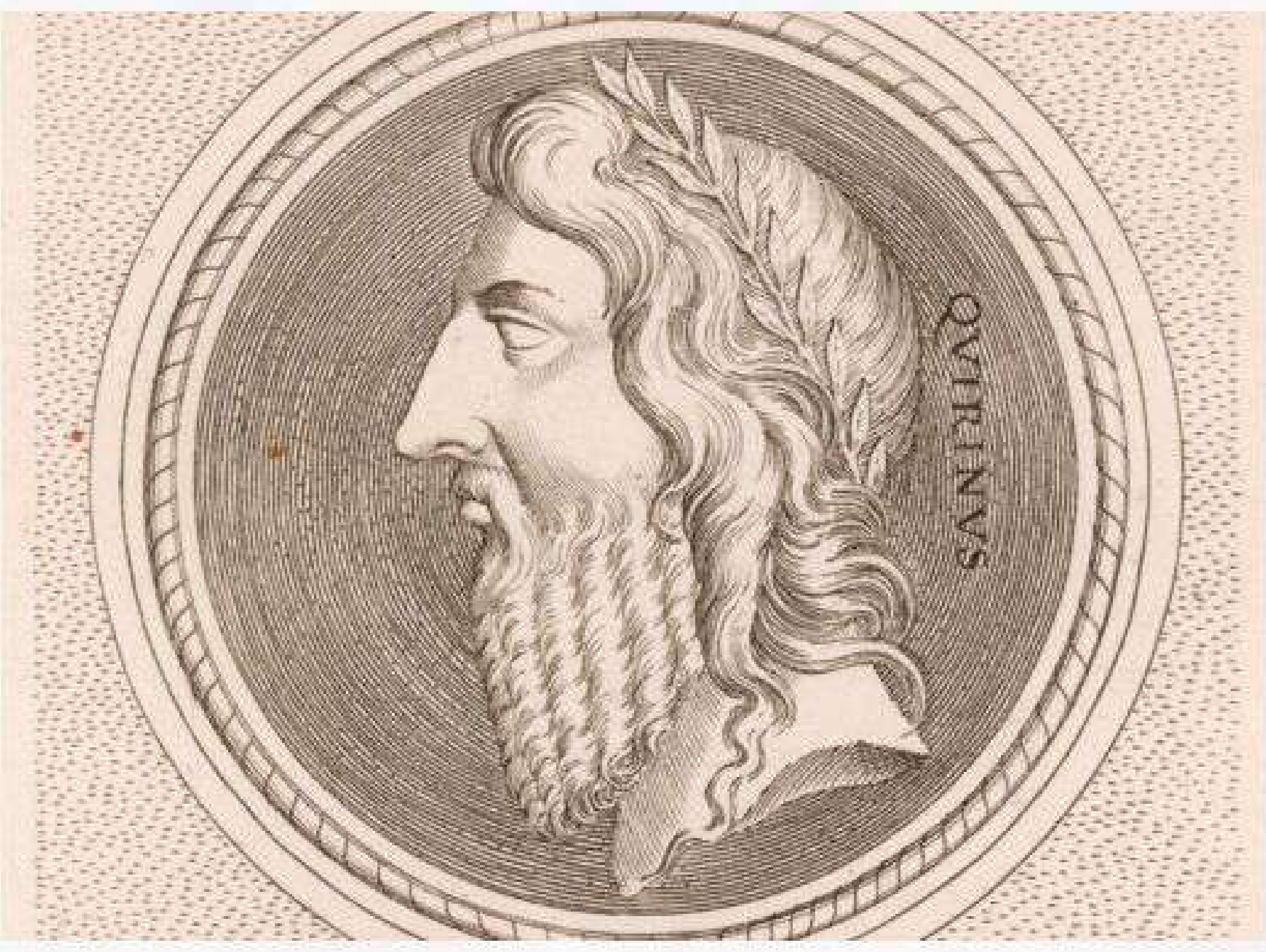
Defining moment

The Senate is founded

753 BCE

Alongside the formation of the Roman Kingdom itself, the Senate was also created. As befitting of its later incarnations, its members consisted of high-ranking citizens from the most influential families who would bring matters of discussion to the attention of the state. It's thought that King Romulus may have been the one who set the Senate up in the first place.

The first Senate consisted of 100 members, each from influential families across the land. Over time, this number doubled as the power of the Senate increased in the creation and maintenance of law and government.



Defining moment

Senate names Nero an enemy

68 CE

Nero, the final emperor of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, proved to be one of Rome's most unpopular rulers and his decisions and policies not only alienated the people and the army, but even the Senate itself. There was even the Great Fire of Rome in 64 CE, which many blame on Nero as an excuse to build a planned palatial complex, the Domus Aurea.

When in hiding in 68 CE, Nero learned that the Senate had finally grown tired of his antics and declared him an enemy of the state. He was ordered to be brought to the Forum and beaten to death.

Timeline

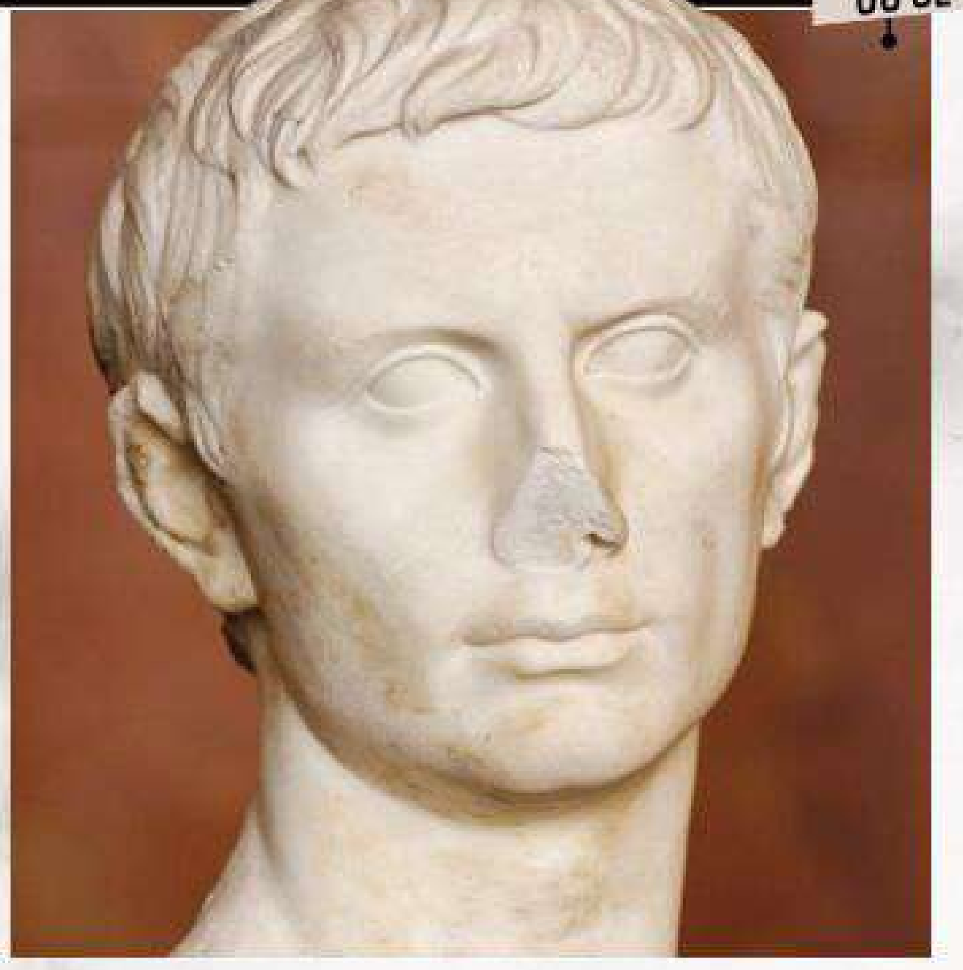
753 BCE · 494 BCE · 341 BCE · 121 BCE · 27 BCE · 68 CE

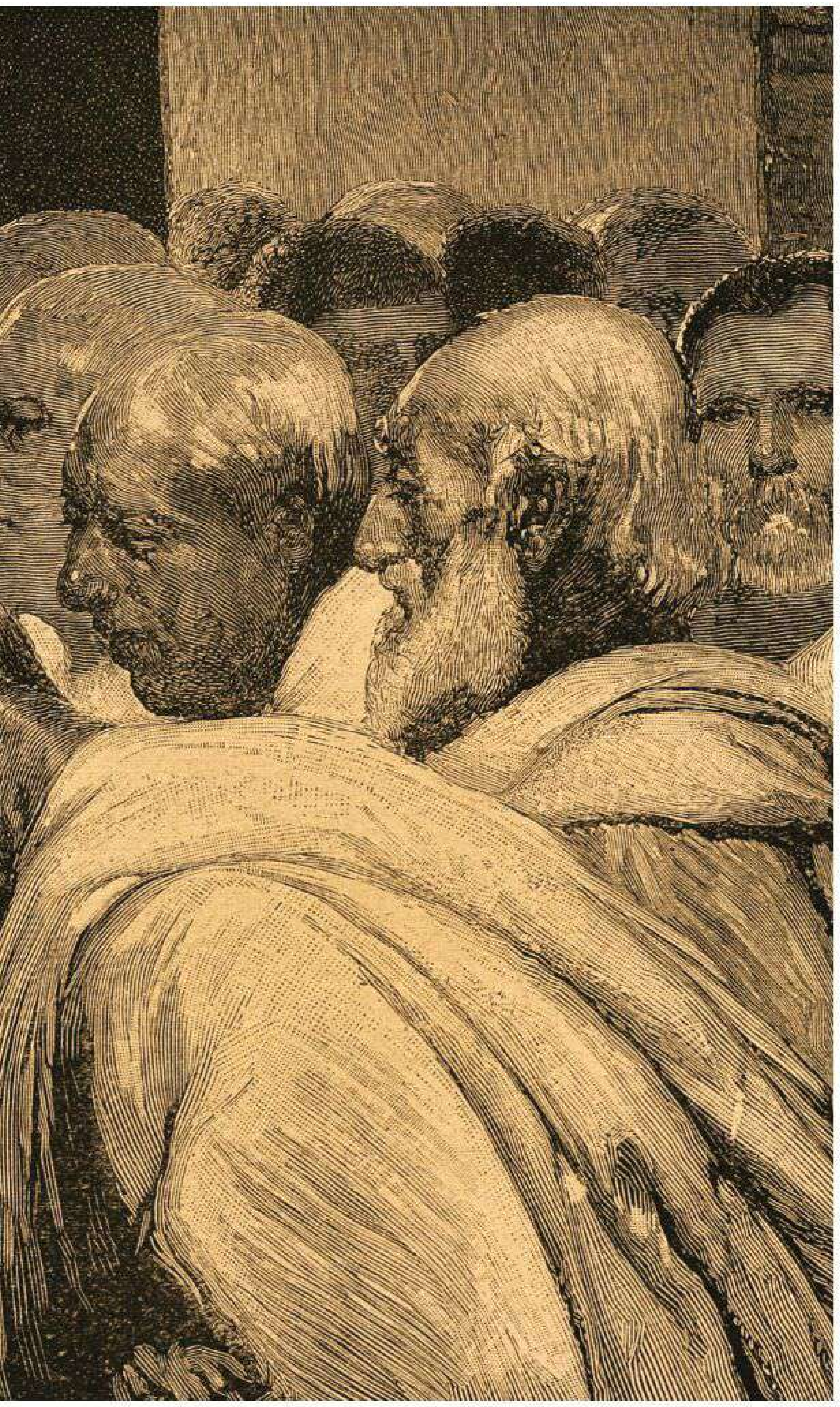
Tribune of the Plebs increased
The Tribunes of the Plebs, a Roman office of state that was open to plebeians (regular citizens), was increased in number by the Senate due to its popularity.
494 BCE

Senate agrees peace with Samnites
Following decades of war with the Samnites (a people who lived in a stretch of the Apennine Mountains), the Senate agrees to an early treaty of friendship.
341 BCE

First Senatus consultum ultimum
The Senate passes the first Senatus consultum ultimum, which granted consul Lucius Opimius emergency powers to defeat the partisans of Gaius Gracchus.
121 BCE

Senate grants Augustus new titles
Augustus, the first Emperor of the new Roman era, is granted a series of new national titles including Augustus, Majestic, and Princeps.
27 BCE





decisions involving Rome's interest overseas must be dealt with by the Senate itself. It was a sign of the office becoming more self aware of its role within a larger machine, however, the Senate still showed a sense of restraint. There was never an independent desire to acquire absolute power in the realm - for instance, the declaration of war and the ratification of treaties remained with the people.

The power and influence of the Senate began to wane before the rise of the Roman Empire. The nation was beginning to splinter with internal conflict, including the issue of prominent army generals and politicians gaining independent followings that saw that attempt to curry favour with the Senate. The rise of the Triumvirate (including the man that would beckon in the Empire, Julius Caesar) also threatened the Senate's influence over the people, as did the three horrific uprisings (sometimes referred to as Servile Wars) that plagued the end of the Republic.

By the time of Julius Caesar installing himself as dictator, and his subsequent assassination, the Senate was once again about to endure a significant transformation. The beginning of the Empire proper with the formation of the Principate saw the projected image of the emperor working in cooperation with the Senate to run the state - in reality, the emperor retained far more power than the consuls that preceded him ever had.

The Senate had swollen to around 900 by this point (a change brought in by Julius Caesar in order to fill it with his own supporters in the buildup to his own ascendancy), but this was reduced to 600 under Augustus. For a time it retained full control of the treasury, but Augustus (the first emperor of the Principate) removed his power as more control was consolidated into the throne.

The emperor's power over the Senate during the Empire was absolute. Now, an individual could gain entry into the Senate by being granted the chance to be elected as a quaestor by the emperor, or granted automatic quaestorship and entry into the Senate by imperial decree. The Senate was simply at the beck and call of the emperor, and it only got worse from there.

The Senate was once again relegated to the role of advisory council and it was a position that would only degrade following anarchy of the Crisis of Third Century. The end of that chaotic period saw the rise of Tetrarchy, a four-person seat of emperorhood that led the Empire to be carved into four sections. The main mind behind the Tetrarchy, Diocletian, even made a decree that gave the emperor the right to remove all executive power from the Senate without warning, further whittling down the Senate's influence.

As the Empire waned, the Senate endured but it was a shell of its former self and ultimately petered out as the Empire slowly fragmented and was conquered part by part. And yet, while it ultimately followed the Empire itself into the grave, the Senate's impact on modern politics lives on to this day. The idea of a democratic forum where a man could air his opinion and veto a law he did not agree with lives on in many a parliament and senate, while the idea of civil law (where laws were codified alongside proportionate punishment) exists now as a basic fundamental of modern law.

> "Diocletian made a decree that gave the emperor the right to remove all executive power from the Senate"

Defining moment

Diocletian dismantles Senate power

293 CE

In perhaps the most decisive reduction in Senate power since its creation, the first emperor of the Tetrarchy in 293 CE (an era where four leaders ruled the Empire in four different section), Diocletian, began stripping away many of the office's official powers. He did this via a series of radical reforms, one of which stated the emperors would have the theoretical power to assume total control of the state from the Senate.

The Senate did retain the power to try treason cases and determine the order of appearance during a debate, but it was a shadow of its former self compared to the power it had once wielded at the heart of the Empire.

117 CE 238 CE 275 CE 293 CE 325 CE 330 CE 552 CE

Hadrian recognised by the Senate
As was the case with every single official emperor of Ancient Rome, the Senate officially recognised Hadrian as the next official ruler of Rome.
117 CE

Senate elects two rulers
On the 22 April 238 CE, the Senate elects two rulers to govern Rome (much like the old consuls of the Republic) in the form of senators Pupienus and Balbinus.
238 CE

Senate recognises Tacitus
In September 275 CE, following the murder of Emperor Aurelian by the Praetorian Guard, the Senate recognises his successor Tacitus.
275 CE

First Council of Nicaea
The Senate found its position ignored as Constantine convenes a meeting of bishops and officials to determine whether Jesus Christ held the same status as God Himself.
325 CE

Roman capital moved to Constantinople
The Christian emperor Constantine the Great moves the capital of the Empire to Byzantium where he created the city of Constantinople.
330 CE

Senators executed following death of Totila
After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the Senate continued under the Eastern kings. However, a number of senators are murdered in retaliation for the death of Ostrogoth's King Totila.
552 CE

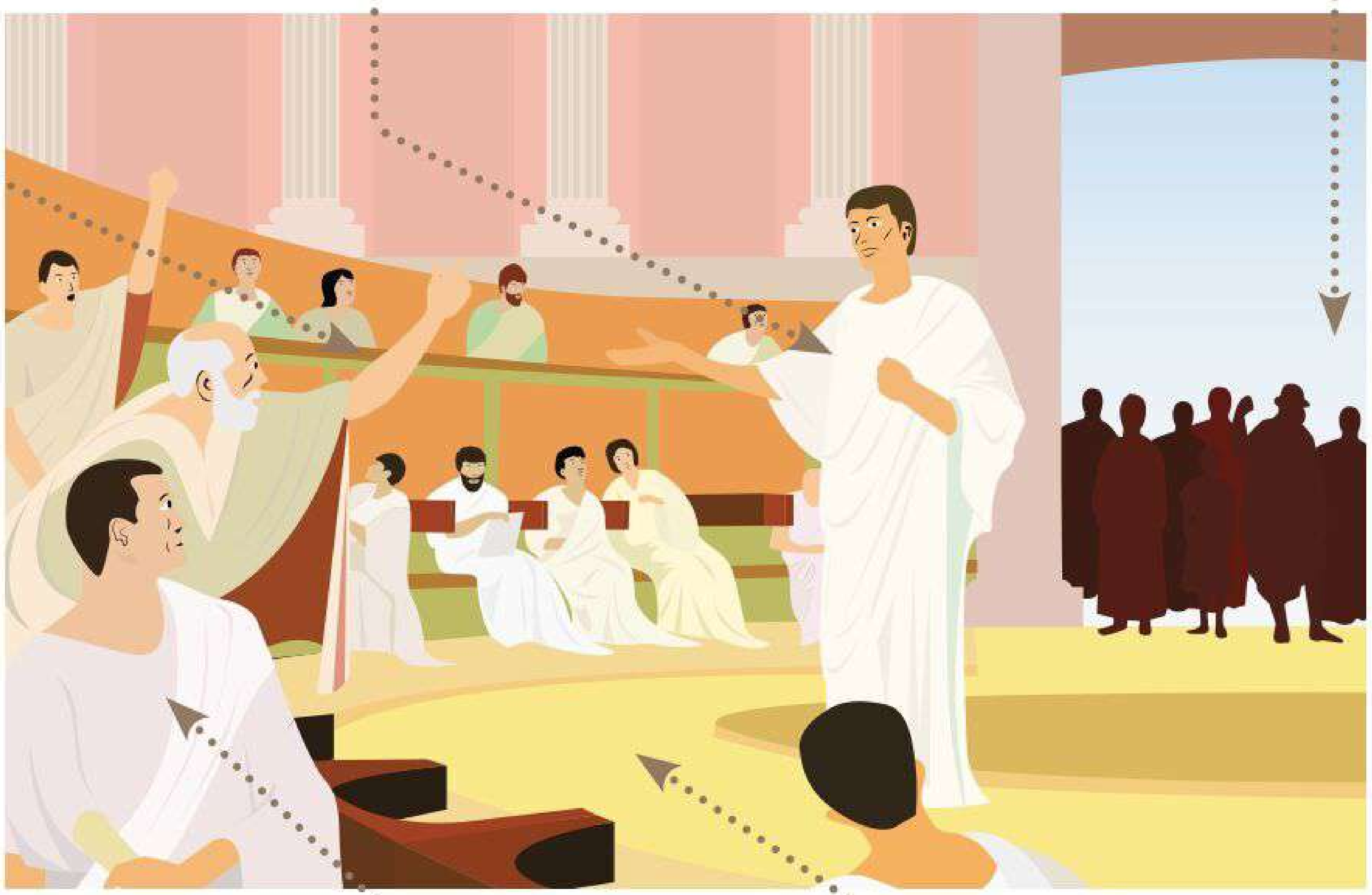
© Alamy

How to become a Roman consul

Want to learn how to gain power and influence in Ancient Rome? Here's how to do it

It was the highest elected office in the days of the Roman Republic, and two consuls were elected at any one time, each serving a one-year term before being replaced. Their duties spanned a vast range of civil and military tasks, and from 367 BCE a plebeian (common) citizen could even stand for office. This kind of democracy wouldn't last, however, as the death of Julius Caesar and subsequent wars led to the establishment of the Roman Empire in 27 BCE. The consuls' powers were absorbed by that of the emperor, leaving them as mere figureheads.

Inside the senate



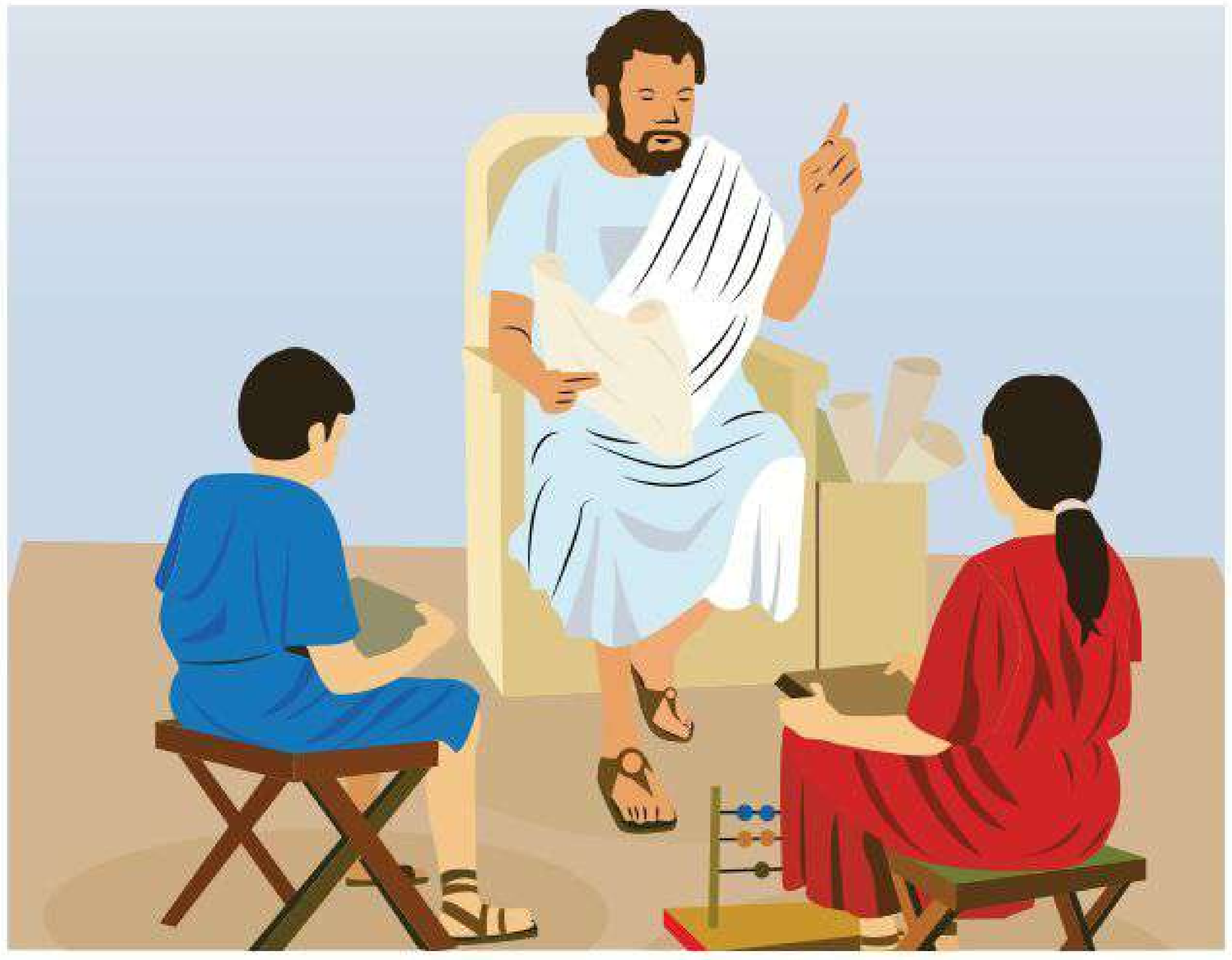
Venue
Many locations were used for senate meetings, such as the Temples of Jupiter Capitolinus, Fides, Concord and Apollo.

Consul
As the consul would frequently address the senate, he was expected to have a dominant presence and strong oratory style.

Open doors
Meetings were public. To highlight this, doors were left open during meetings, so anyone could observe them.

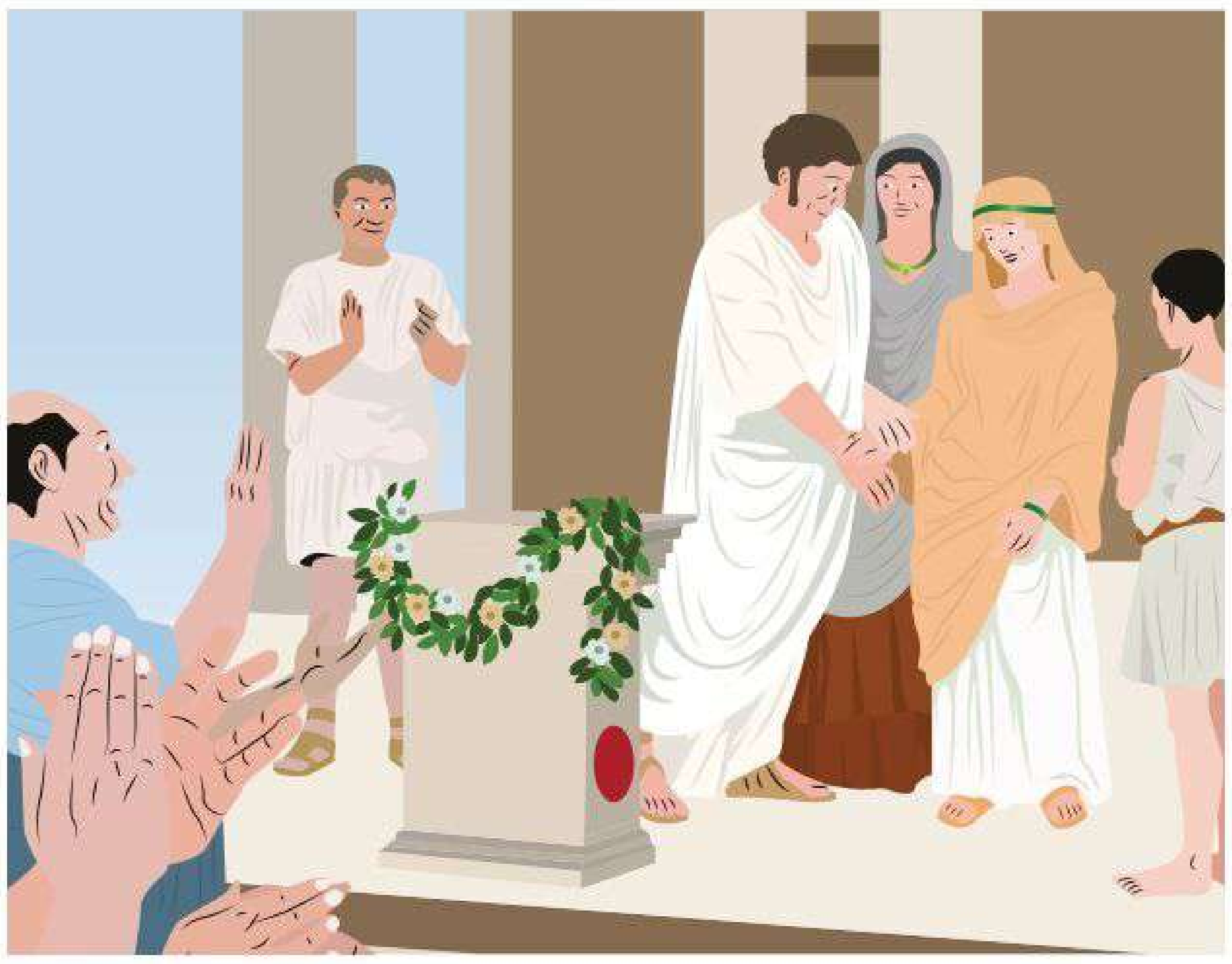
Audience
The senate originally comprised 100 men but increased to around 300 at the height of the Republic.

Traditions
One way to keep your opponents from the floor was to keep talking – a tactic employed several times by Cato the Younger.



01 Get educated

Roman consuls are expected to have the immense confidence and education necessary to be superb public orators. For this reason, find yourself a private tutor – known around these woods as a pedagogue – to make sure you have the basic reading skills to lay the foundations you need to learn the art of rhetoric.



02 Marry into a wealthy family

If all else fails, attempt to increase your influence by marrying into it. In Rome, powerful and wealthy families often support each other in the form of alliances known as *amicitia*, which are generally made concrete in the form of arranged marriages. Being associated with a great family is a quick way to get some votes.

Duties of the consul

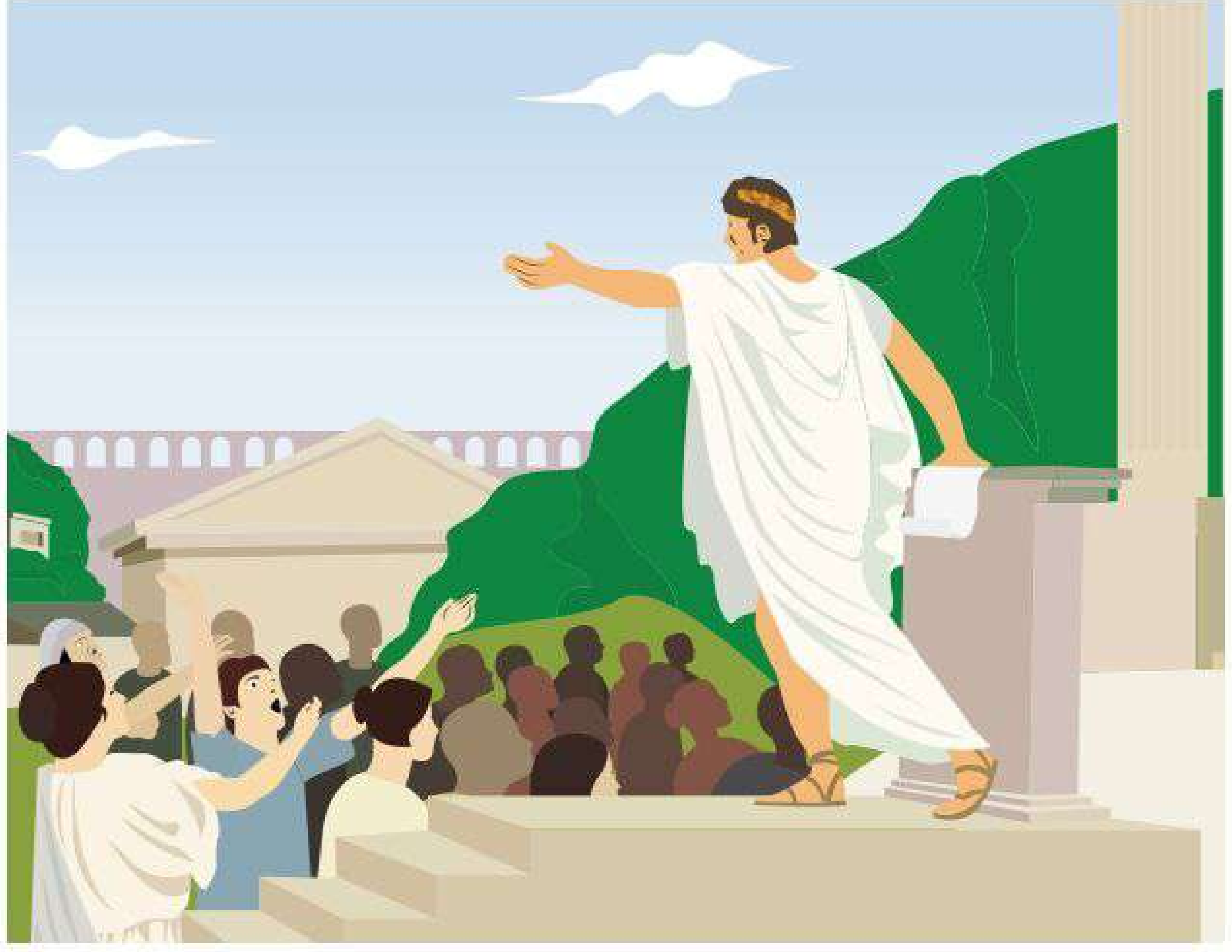
Chief Judge
This power was transferred to the praetors in 366 BCE, but consuls would still serve as judges in serious cases and whenever called upon.

Senate
Consuls were responsible for passing the laws of the senate, as well as acting as ambassadors on behalf of it.

Military
Consuls were the commanders-in-chief of the vast and strong Roman army, which they governed with the assistance of military tribunes.

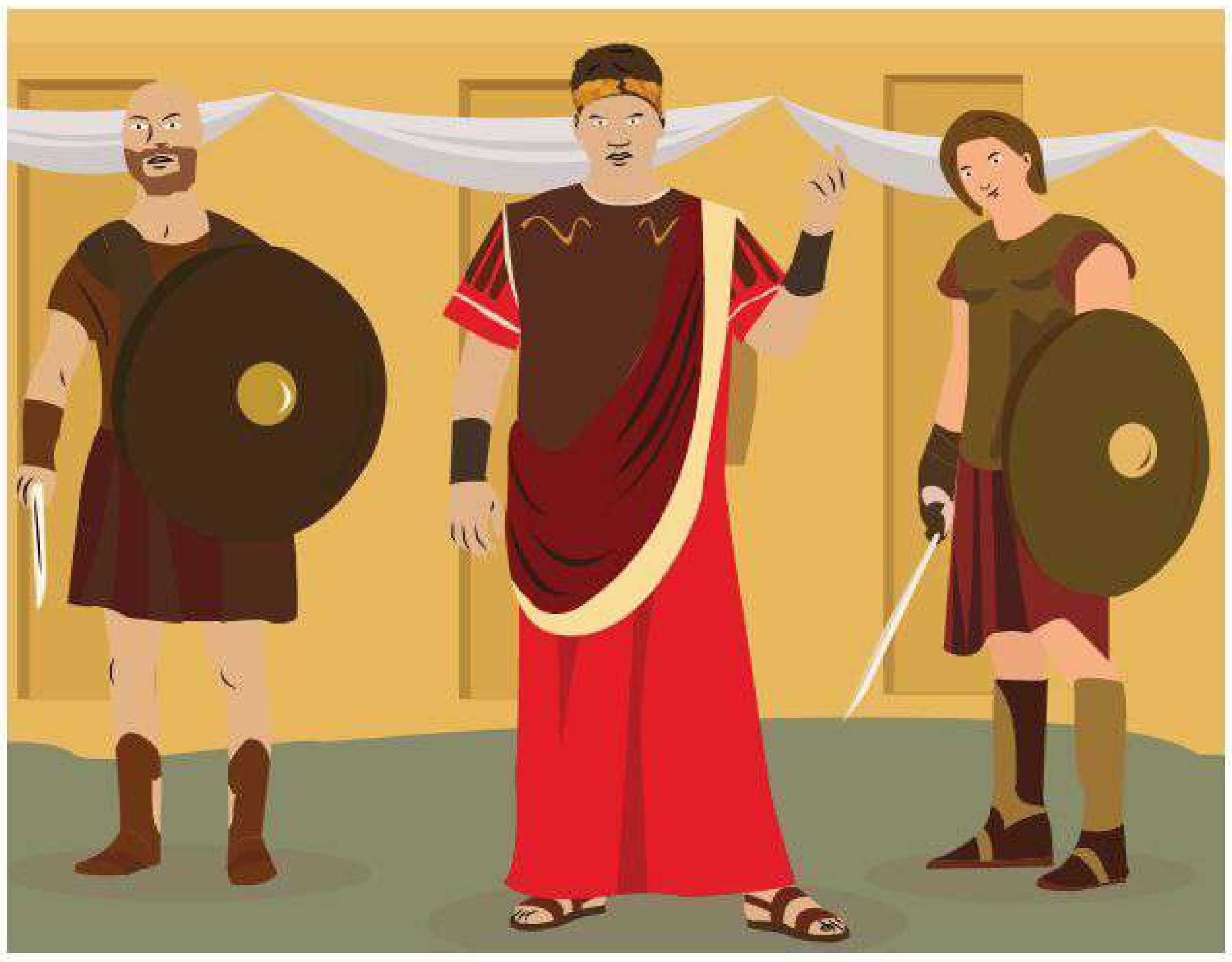
Governorship
After leaving office, each consul was assigned – at random – a province or area to govern for a term of anywhere between one and five years.

Veto
Each consul had the power to block his colleague's decree, in the process ensuring that important decisions were only made in unison.



03 Be a showman

The better you present yourself to the people, the higher your odds of becoming a consul. As Marcus Tullius Cicero himself says: "Surround yourself with large numbers of people from every class and rank… Make sure your campaign has plenty of ceremony, brilliance and entertainment for the people."

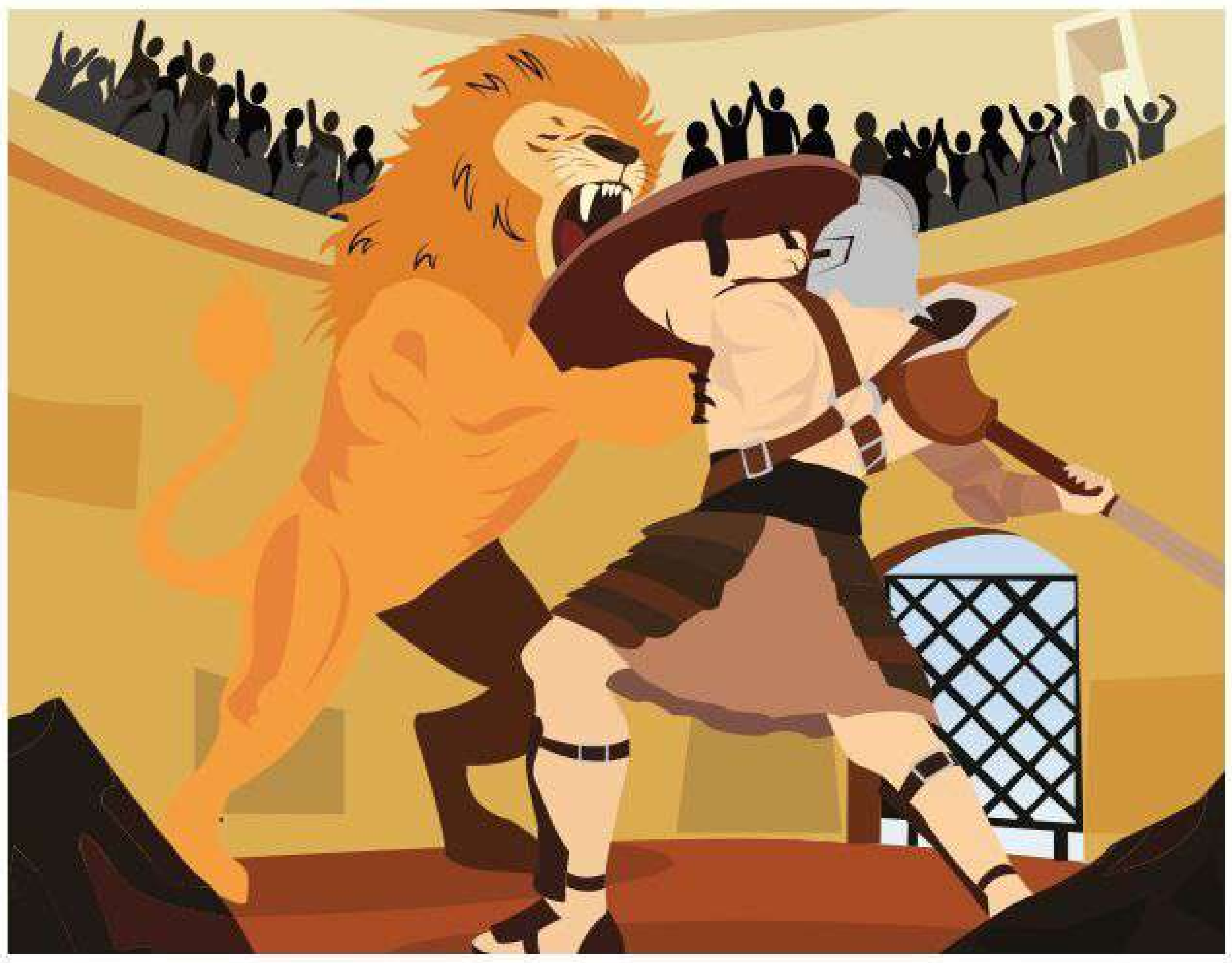


04 Intimidate your rivals

You mustn't be afraid to use less than savoury means in order to get what you want. This can include inciting riots or hiring heavies – gladiators are particularly effective options here – to beat people up. If you happen to be a general, even better; simply make use of your heavily armed troops to threaten disorder.

05 Indulge in bribery

Bribery is common, especially in these waning days of the Roman Republic. Should you decide upon this as an option, be aware that it can take two forms: direct bribery (paying off officials with money in return for votes) or indirect (provision of free grain, entertainment and outdoor banquets).

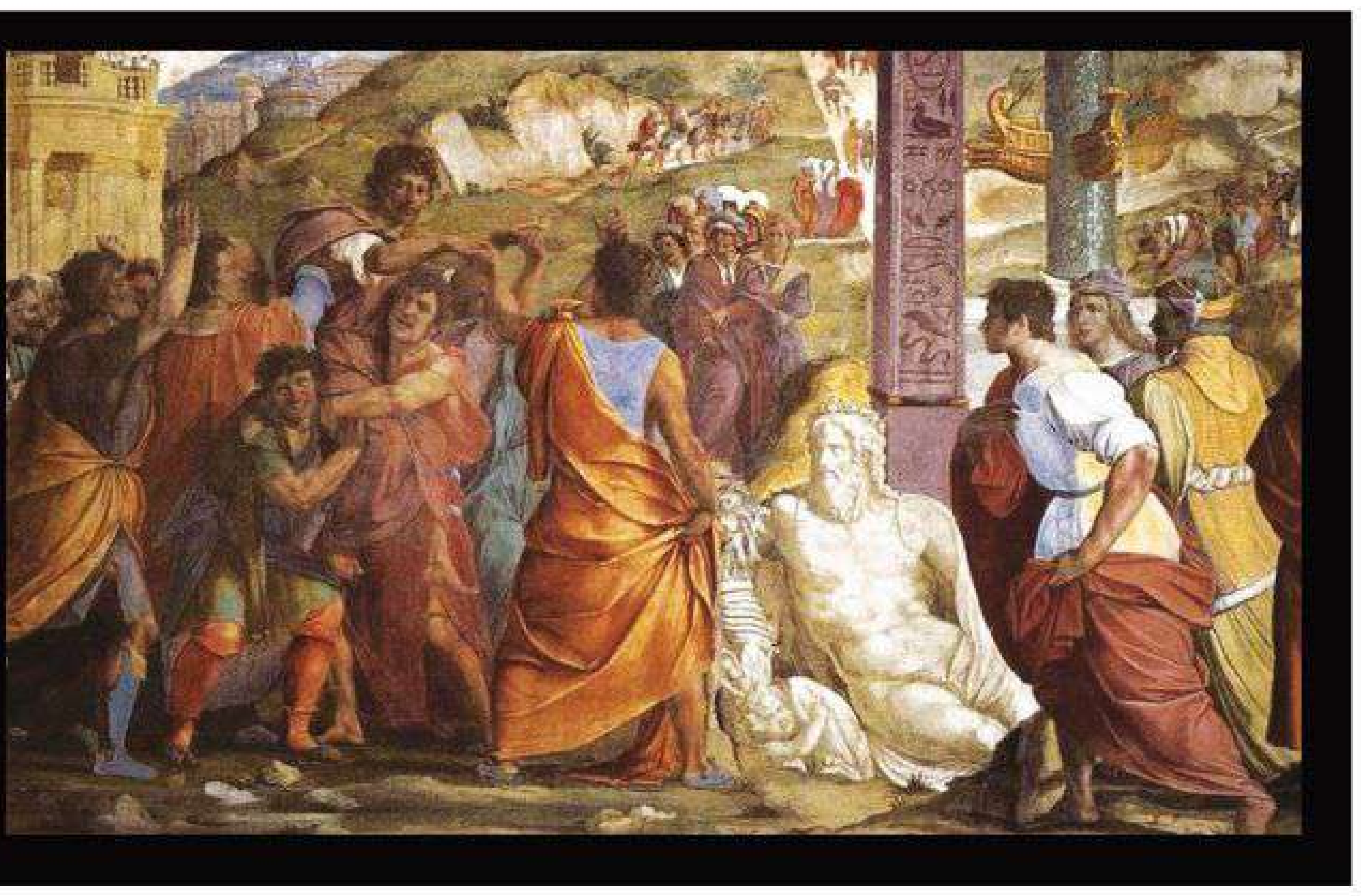


06 Become a mob favourite

A man who has the support of the mob is a powerful man indeed, and should help you in your quest to become a consul. Putting on a series of gladiatorial games – preferably with a host of exotic animals – is a safe method of getting the mob on your side and willing to support you.

How not to… seize power

Lucius Sergius Catilina, more commonly known as Catiline, was a prospective consul whose attempts to seize power went horribly wrong. Having been forbidden to campaign for election as a consul at an earlier date due to facing charges of extortion (he was ultimately acquitted), he was later defeated in 64 BCE by Cicero. Angered by this, he planned to take power by force, gathering a number of followers by promising to cancel debts, as well as appealing to the wants and needs of the poor. However, Cicero was constantly kept abreast of Catiline's actions, forcing him to flee Rome after denouncing him as a traitor. Catiline later tried to enter Gaul (France) with his army, but he was prevented from doing so by forces led by general Gaius Antonius Hybrida in 62 BCE at Pistoria, where he and the majority of his followers were killed.

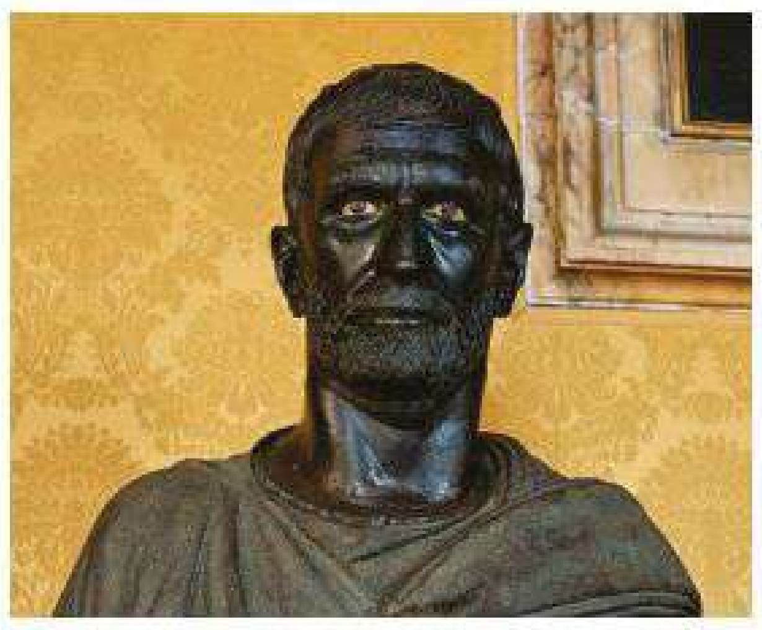


(In)famous consuls

Lucius Junius Brutus

509 BCE

The founder of the Roman Republic, he was one of the first consuls and is claimed to be an ancestor of Marcus Junius Brutus, one of Julius Caesar's assassins.



Julius Caesar

100-44 BCE

Caesar was consul on five separate occasions, before being murdered after declaring himself a dictator for life.

Mark Antony

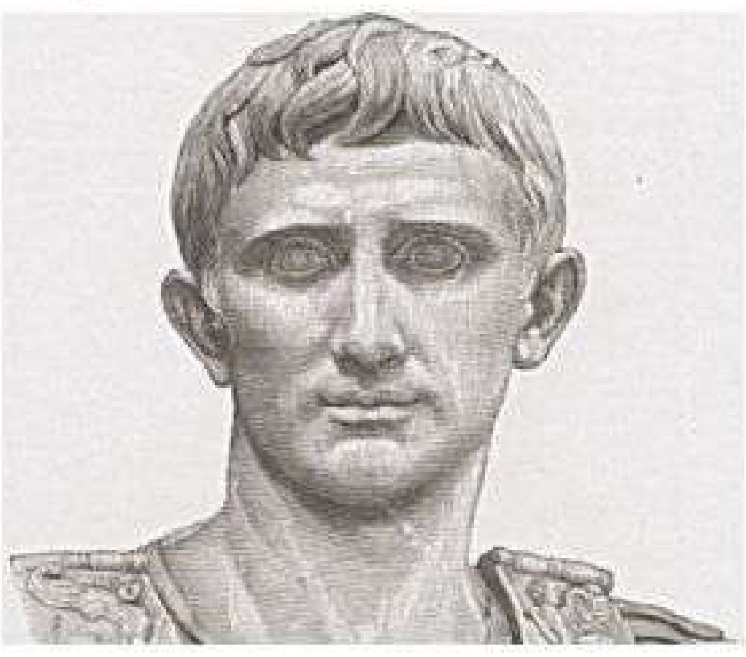
83-30 BCE

A consul on two occasions, he later ruled with Octavian before falling out, losing against him in battle and committing suicide with his lover, Cleopatra.

Augustus

63 BCE-14 CE

Formerly known as Octavian, he first became consul in 43 BCE, before becoming the first Roman emperor in 27 BCE.



How the Romans lived

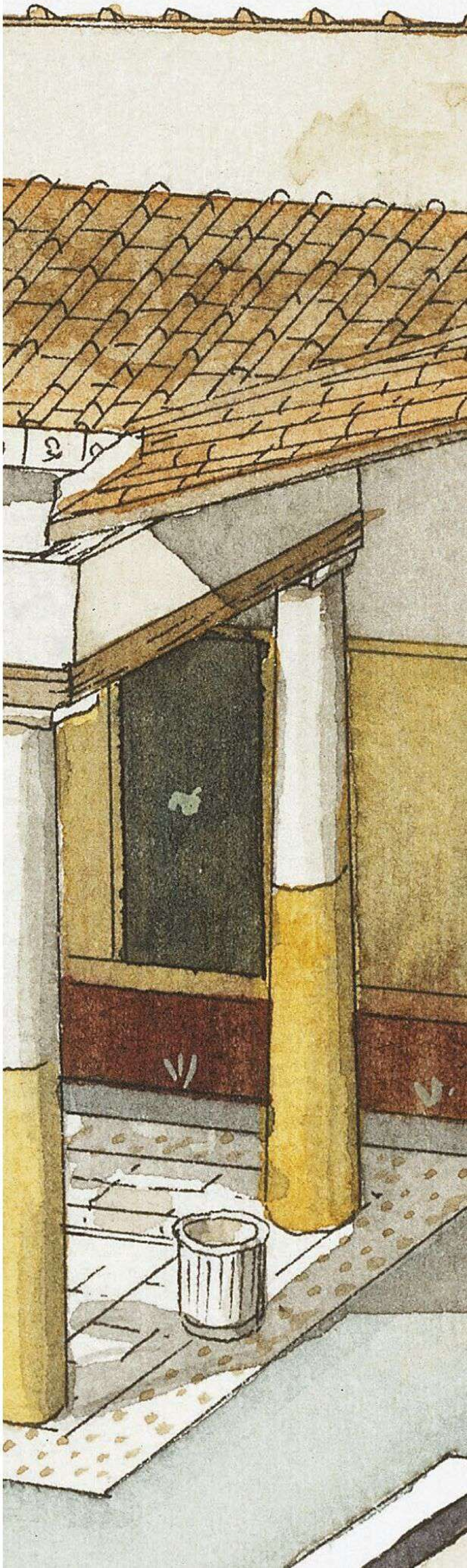
All walks of life filled the streets of Ancient Rome, and for the poorer people of society the empire was very different to those at the top

Work hard, play hard. That appears to be the mantra by which a lot of Romans lived their lives. There's a general impression that the Romans were a wealthy, articulate bunch, who had splendid villas and clothes. However, that, in truth, is only half the story. As in any society, the normal men and women who lived and worked in Rome (Plebeians) led very different lives to those at the top of the tree (Patricians), residing in homes that were a world apart from the nobility and the elite and having differing levels of access to education and health provisions.

Today, most of the physical evidence of the lower class' existence has crumbled away. Their poorly built homes and unwritten stories have been lost to time. But historians have still been able to piece together the structure of Roman life: how they ate, what they wore, where they bathed and how they were schooled.

We also know that wealth was the key towards a good life, even for slaves who found they could amass money and sometimes buy their freedom.

"The normal men and women who lived and worked in Rome (Plebeians) led very different lives to those at the top of the tree (Patricians)"



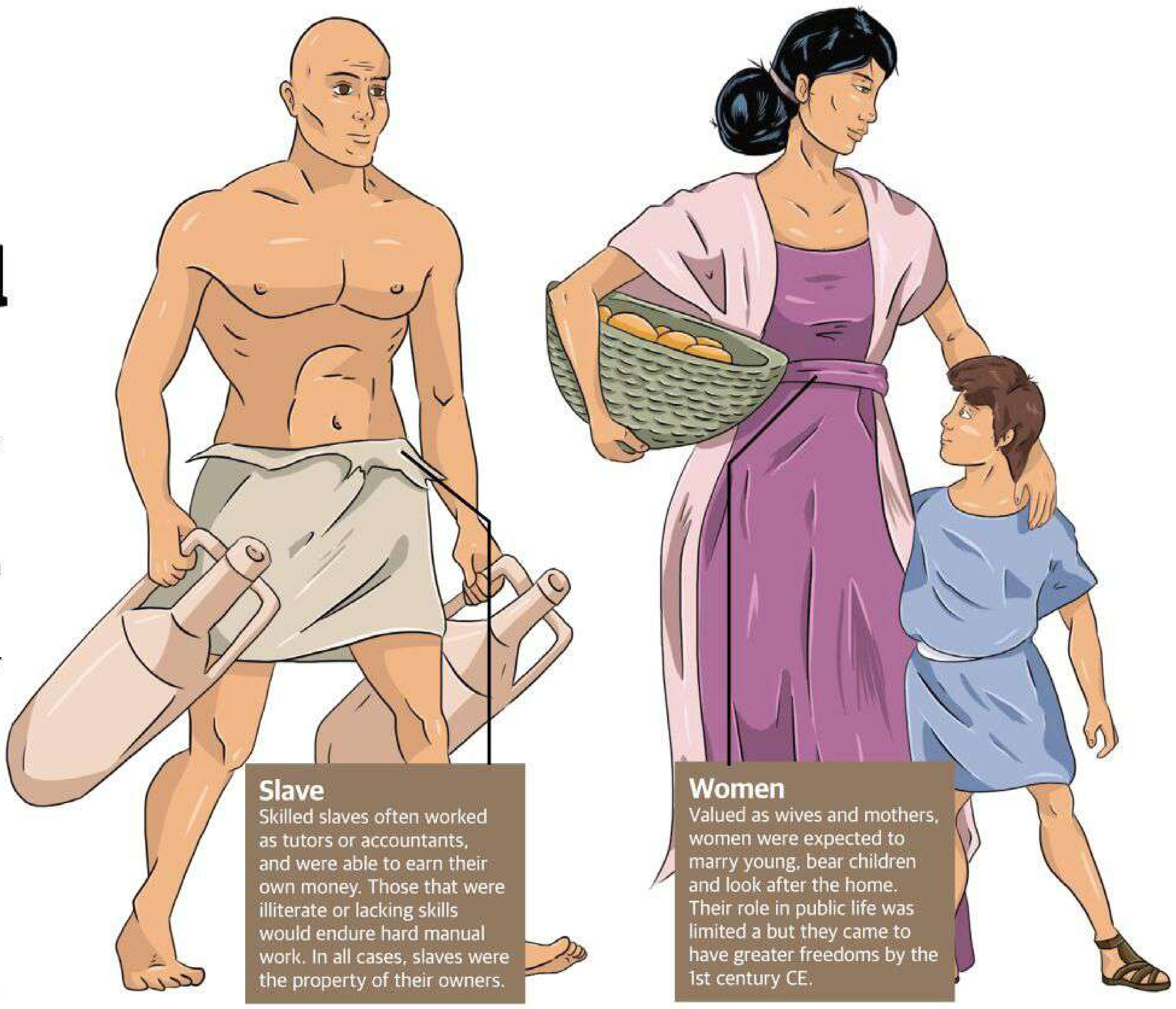
Class act: how the Romans were divided

Roman society was a complex system made up of a strong social pecking order that went far beyond a simplistic dichotomy of very rich and incredibly poor. While we are familiar with the privileged lives of the emperors, senators and the equestrians below them, perhaps the most intriguing class of all was that of the plebeian.

The men and women of the lower classes were the beating heart of the empire but there were few comforts their work afforded them, and this didn't go unnoticed. A great dispute arose between the patricians and the plebeians in 494 BCE and it raged intermittently for 200 years.
In that year, the plebeians threatened to leave Rome – a withdrawal of manpower which would have proved devastating – and concessions were introduced. However, in the minds of the Romans there was still a difference in social standing, and the further down the chain you belonged, the worse your life became.

Beneath the plebeians in the Roman class hierarchy were the freedmen and the slaves. The latter did not hold citizenship, while the former had either been granted their freedom or had purchased it themselves.

Being a citizen afforded a Roman a relatively comfortable life and certain rights, making it possible to vote, own property, lawfully marry, make contracts, sue, and attain a lawyer in court to avoid torture or death for any crime except treason. However, women had a more limited citizenship.



Slave
Skilled slaves often worked as tutors or accountants, and were able to earn their own money. Those that were illiterate or lacking skills would endure hard manual work. In all cases, slaves were the property of their owners.

Women
Valued as wives and mothers, women were expected to marry young, bear children and look after the home. Their role in public life was limited a but they came to have greater freedoms by the 1st century CE.

Life among the classes

In such a cut-throat city, how did the patricians, equestrians and plebeians navigate through Roman life?

If there was a social leveller in Rome, then it would be found in the public toilets, where 95 per cent of the million-strong population sat, chatted and did their foulest of business. Within the latrine walls, the Romans were at their most naked, with their tunics pulled up and squatting over the large holes cut in wood or stone, and their privacy completely whipped away. They wiped their bottoms with water-soaked sponges attached to sticks, which they then discarded into the Roman sewer system.

Back out on the streets, however, life was very different. There the class system was very much in place. At the top end of the scale were the higher ranks of Romans: the emperor, senators – who wore tunics with broad stripes called laticlavi – and an economic class of equestrians – who wore a tunic with narrow stripes called the angusti clavi. But further down, there were the ordinary people of Rome, wrapped in a long semicircle of woollen cloth called a toga, as well as the freedmen and the slaves. However the freedmen often occupied roles in the Imperial Palace, and so could improve their social standing and gain quality clothing.

The Plebeians saw Rome as it really was, away from the ornate, marbled villas and the grand buildings enjoyed by the privileged. Their warts-and-all view was of the cramped apartments in which they lived, multiple people to a room, in crowded areas that would absorb ever greater numbers year after year. For them Roman life was the narrow streets between the squalid high-rise garrets, the busy taverns and visiting the ground floor shops (tabernae) to buy food and essentials.

These areas may have wafted with the smell of fresh bread and exotic foods, but there would also have been the unmistakable stench of sweat, blood and human waste. Rome was usually a rowdy city, with fighting in the public areas, rows among residents, evidence of domestic violence and the ever-present risk of fire. Any moments of bliss could be interrupted by the emptying of a chamber pot out of a window to the ground below, particularly in the roughest part of town (Subura.)

Rome certainly wasn't a city for the feint hearted, and the governors and senators had a constant battle to quash plebeian revolts and disharmony. Providing a weekly ration of grain and entertainment seemed satisfy the lower classes and the organisers or benefactors of festivals were always held in high esteem.

Rome was seen as a ready-made job market for the poorer man, its streets perceived to be paved with gold as much as dirt and disease. The many building projects meant there was always a pressing need for labour, so plenty of people emigrated there looking to work. After its founding, the city of Rome fast became a bustling multicultural metropolis, but it was impossible to build enough quality accommodation for everyone.

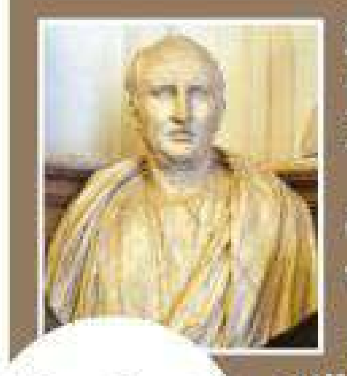
The harsh living quarters were generally as good as it got for hundreds of thousands of people, and for that reason, they tended to live most of their life outside of their apartments. The whole of Rome became their home.

With so much time spent in the company of others, the plebeians were known for being sociable and rowdy. They were also mostly tolerant of different races and religions. Incomers were integrated into the city just as they had been from the moment Romulus and Remus' founded Rome as a city of outsiders, inviting criminals and runaways to seek asylum. People quickly got involved in the busy Roman way of life.

Workers would rise early, toiling through the day for a small

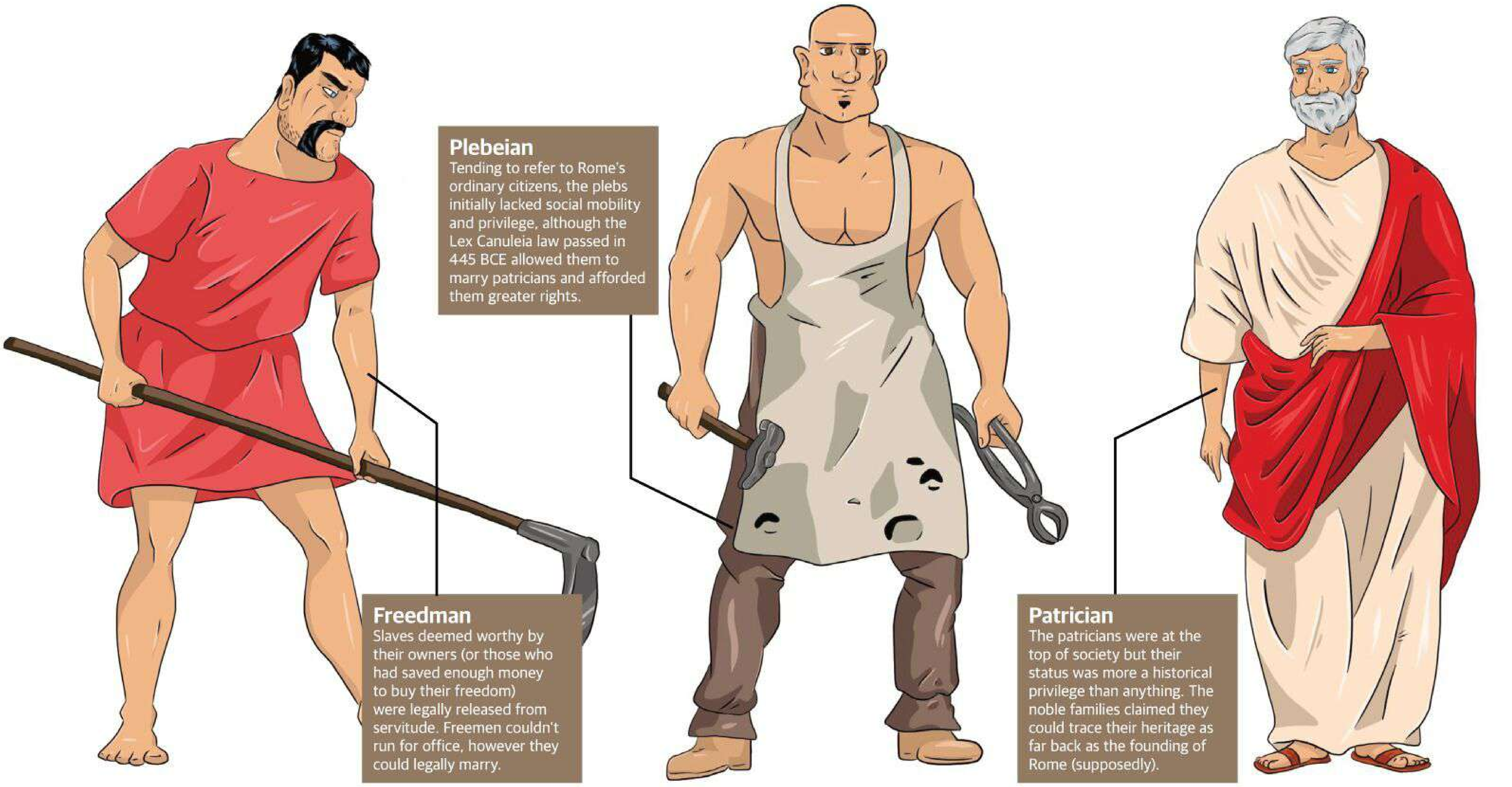
MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO

3 Jan 106 BCE – 7 Dec 43 BCE



Brief Bio

Since a large factor in a Roman's 'nobility' was their ancestry, plebs who amassed money were still not considered patricians. The inability for Rome to shake off traditional divisions resulted in the creation of an equestrian class, acting as our equivalent of the middle-class today. Cicero was an equestrian by birth, however he managed to become a senator through political connections and his notoriety as a great lawyer and orator. While his speeches and writing greatly influenced Roman politics, he could fall prone to snobbishness, once speaking of the *sordida plebs* – the great unwashed – a turn of phrase still common today. He was also an outspoken critic of Caesar.



Plebeian
Tending to refer to Rome's ordinary citizens, the plebs initially lacked social mobility and privilege, although the Lex Canuleia law passed in 445 BCE allowed them to marry patricians and afforded them greater rights.

Freedman
Slaves deemed worthy by their owners (or those who had saved enough money to buy their freedom) were legally released from servitude. Freemen couldn't run for office, however they could legally marry.

Patrician
The patricians were at the top of society but their status was more a historical privilege than anything. The noble families claimed they could trace their heritage as far back as the founding of Rome (supposedly).

amount of money and seeking ways to supplement their income elsewhere. Children would also work, the boys serving apprenticeships and the girls carrying out domestic chores under the watchful eyes of their mothers or *domina* (female master) - usually splendidly dressed in their stolas given shape by a belt called a zona. Schools were mainly fee-paying and were reserved for the rich and privileged. However, poorer families would look to educate their sons themselves, fathers teaching sons the tools of their trade.

Generations of the poor, therefore, grew up largely illiterate but skilled none-the-less. By the age of 14 (12 for girls), the men would be married, their coming of age marked by a hearty banquet. Boys could be drafted into the military to help the Roman's to conquer and control far-flung lands and girls were used to manoeuvre through social circles, and join powerful families.

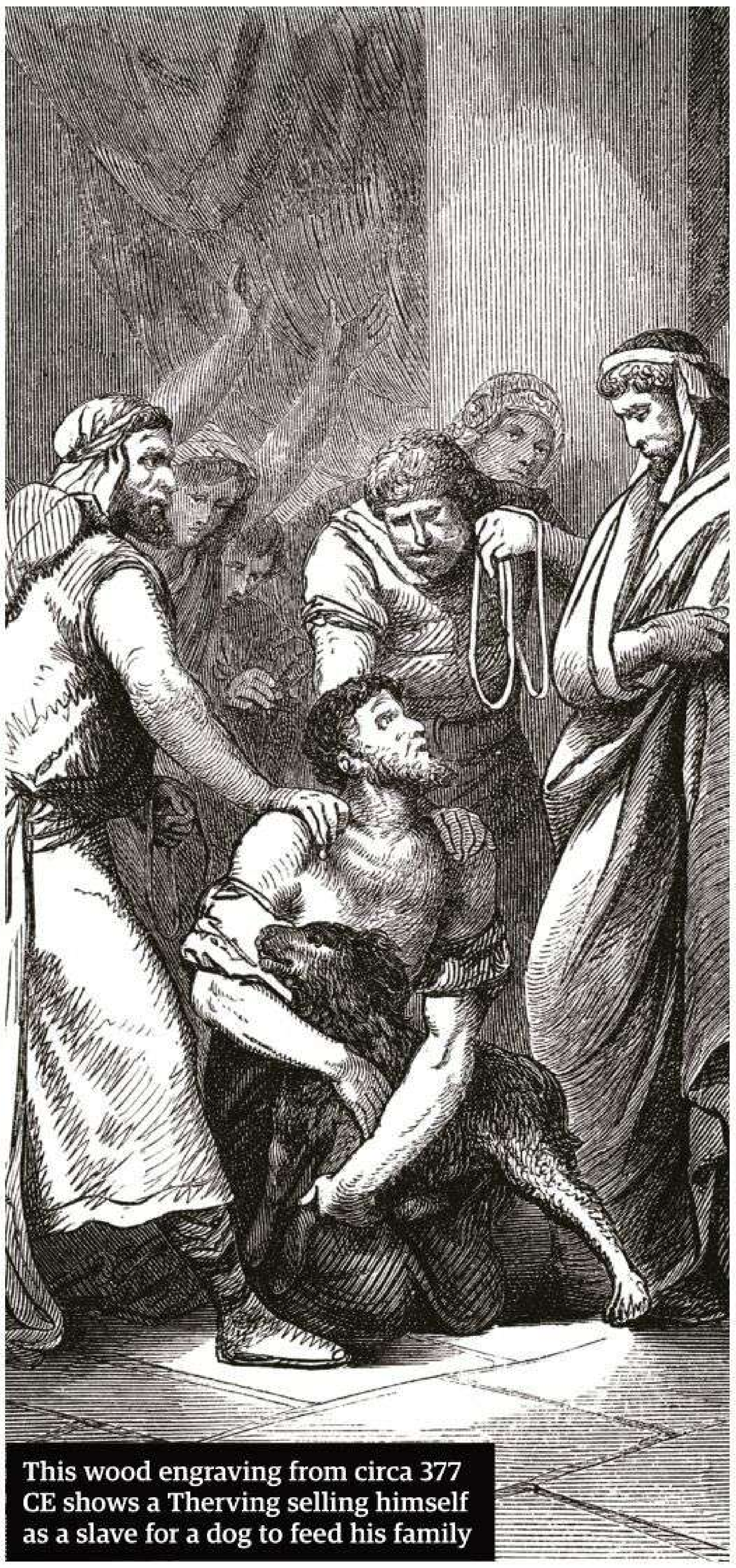
According to Roman legend, Romulus and his twin brother Remus were the offspring of Rhea Silver and the God, Mars.

The soldiers also served another purpose. They were able to capture slaves and bring them back to Rome. Far from being chosen on racial grounds, slaves were generally taken instead for their strength, intelligence, practical skills or appearance. While some were used as labourers or turned into gladiators or other figures of entertainment, they could also hold respectable positions in wealthy households. Rome's obsession with health and well-being, for example, saw an influx of Greek doctors entering as slaves after 47 BCE. As well as allowing Romans the benefits of better hospital treatment and the skill of surgeons, the Greeks aided advances in medicine as well. In some ways, they were perhaps a little too enthusiastic - their willingness to experiment with patients in order to test their theories caused a deep suspicion. But it was usually preferable to the expensive quacks whose methods really were quite unorthodox.

Having treatment available was a benefit of Roman life across the classes: even the slaves much lower down the chain benefited to some degree. It also showed that being brought into Rome as a slave could actually be a good career move for the skilled. Many from the East in particular were intelligent and cultured, and were able to slot easily into society and contribute greatly. In fact, some Roman citizens with overwhelming debt would sell themselves into slavery.

Some slaves were also allowed to earn and keep their own money, saving up to buy their freedom or expensive clothes. By the 1st century CE, more than half of Rome's population was made up of slaves and freedmen. At this time, the Senate proposed slaves wore their own specific identifying tunics but this was rejected because of the potential embarrassment of seeing half of Rome's population dressed in such a way.

Such was the lure of Rome, that when a slave was afforded the status of a freedman, many would remain, becoming a Roman citizen and using their connections to their advantage. Some freedmen actually went on to hold important positions, such as Tiberius Claudius Narcissus, a close confidant of Emperor Claudius who almost succeeded in stopping Nero's succession to become ruler.



This wood engraving from circa 377 CE shows a Therving selling himself as a slave for a dog to feed his family

Housing the Romans

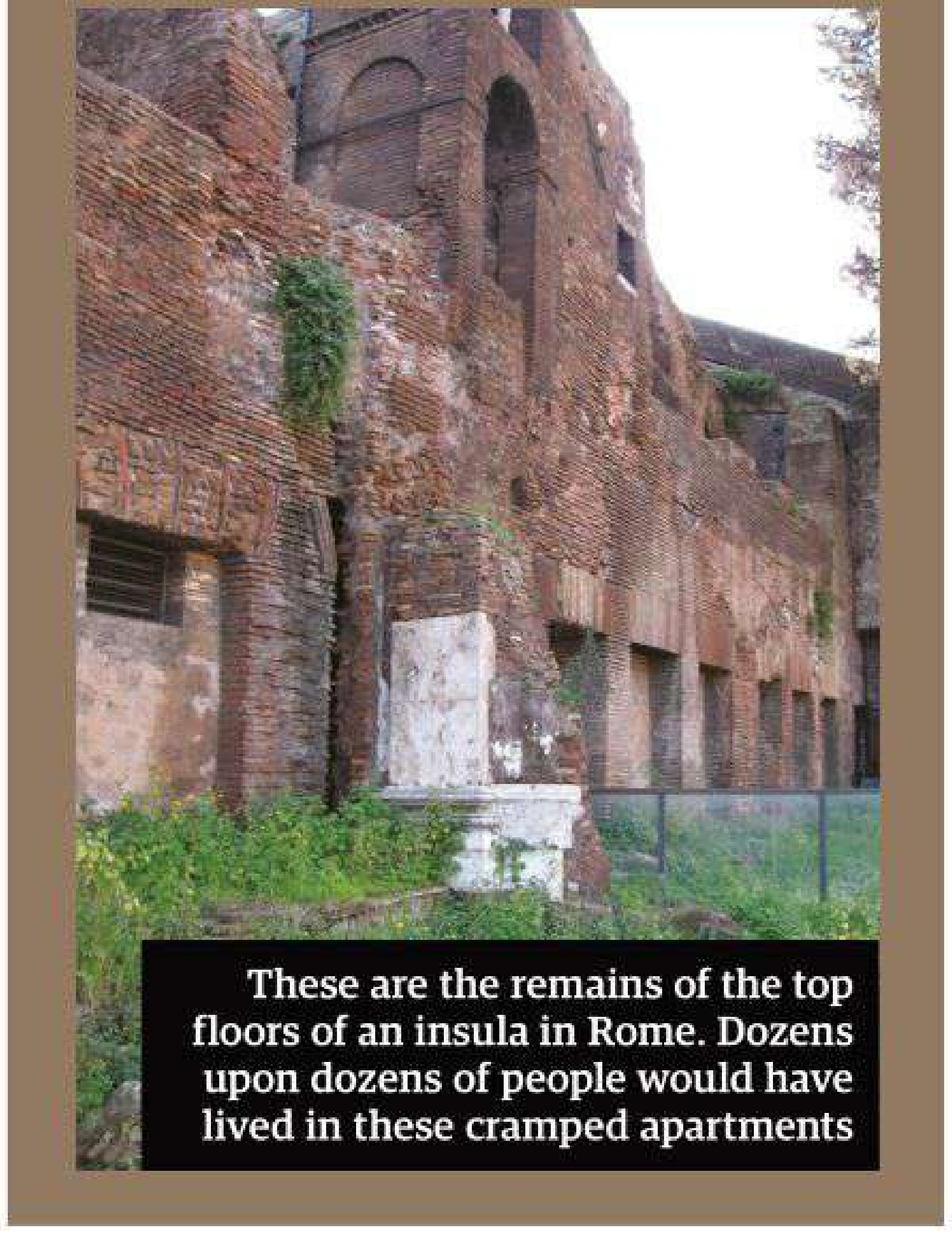
We can see from the architecture left behind across the former Roman Empire that the ancient Romans took construction very seriously and saw it as a way of displaying strength, sophistication and wealth. The equestrians, or the relatively affluent, would live in large, lavish homes called *domus*, that were erected over one floor surrounding an atrium and had multiple rooms, including one or two for the slaves.

Their homes would often be decorative with marble statues and columns adorning their interior and exterior, and there would be beautiful paintings or mosaics. The domus also often had a large bathing pool and a garden in the middle of the building to create a sense of space and nature.

However, the poor lived in cramped apartment blocks that could be as much as nine-storeys tall. Built from mud bricks or timber and with a flat roof on which to enjoy the views or sleep in hot weather, they were called insulae, and only had a couple of rooms at most in which to sleep.

Up to 40 people could live in one block and the facilities were very poor. The Plebs had to use public facilities, venturing into the courtyard to reach the lavatories, bathhouses and even cooking equipment. As such, the courtyard often featured as a handy area for socialising, and given the size of their rooms, few Romans wanted to stay indoors.

The ground floor of these buildings would contain a shop – or *taberna* – which had its own entrances on to the street and so was separated from the apartment block. The wealthy or equestrians would often own these apartments as a way of making extra money from rent.


These are the remains of the top floors of an insula in Rome. Dozens upon dozens of people would have lived in these cramped apartments

The nightlife in Rome

When in Rome, what did the Romans get up to? We know they enjoyed wine, theatre and food, but what else?

A good tribute by a husband to a wife was usually Donum servait; *Lanam fecit* ('she ran the house and made wool'). Such tributes, however, would never have been paid to a group of women in Roman society who were very much looked down upon: prostitutes. Despite being legal, licensed and taxed, prostitution was considered a shameful profession, and yet there was a great demand for it.

Drawn from the slave class, the women operated from brothels dotted around Rome, satiating the Roman's fierce appetite for sex. Called *Meretrix* – or "she who makes commerce of her own body" – they were banned from wearing the stola and had to wear a yellow toga as a sign of their profession. They were also denied the limited rights afforded to other women such as being able to receive an inheritance.

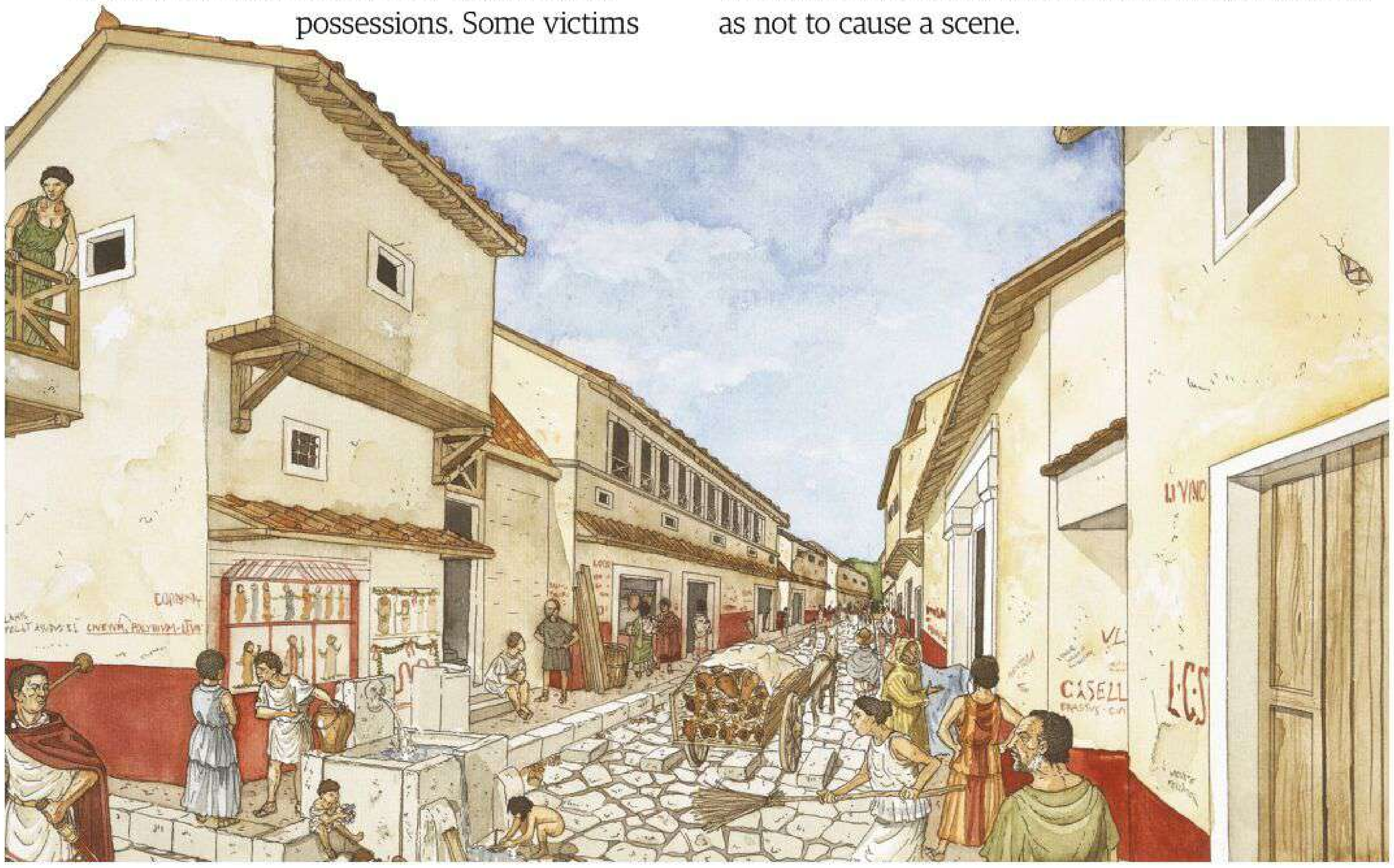
> Dyes were highly prized – anyone wearing Tyrian purple extracted from the sea snail murex would always turn heads.

After dark, Rome became much more seedy. Its streets teaming with danger as criminals made the city their very own and preyed on whoever they felt would be rich pickings. As a form of low class in their own right, they would mug and rob people down the unlit, unpoliced narrow streets. Burglary, arson, murder and fraud were typical crimes, and punishments ranged from whipping to crucifixion – but it didn't deter the desperate. Criminals could be very violent at times and often carried a sharp implement if only to slice the front of a tunic or purse in order to relieve a victim of his possessions. Some victims would take the law into their own hands as they sought to save life and property and there was a clear sense of every man for himself. The courts and lawyers that were in place were not always very effective, with matters not being helped by the fact many people would drink to excess during such periods.

The taverns – which doubled as a poor Roman's kitchen since making dinner within their own homes was too dangerous – came alive at night. During the day, they were places to eat and rest, allowing people an escape from their homes and work. Entertainment would be laid on for the slaves and plebeians who tended to enter, sitting on bar stools, drinking.

At night taverns became more riotous. Located on a quiet side street, with the doors locked, men gambled, socialised and played games which often became heated. They also – if various artwork and the copious graffiti on the walls of ancient Rome's slums are to be believed – engaged in relations, for want of a better word, with their servers.

Taverns, however, were no place for the wealthy, who mostly stayed well away from such places and indeed decried them as being immoral and unbecoming of a Roman citizen. Not that some of those in higher society didn't venture forth. Emperor Nero was a frequent visitor to the taverns and brothels, finding them racy and exciting. Though he always made sure to wear a disguise so as not to cause a scene.



Food for the masses

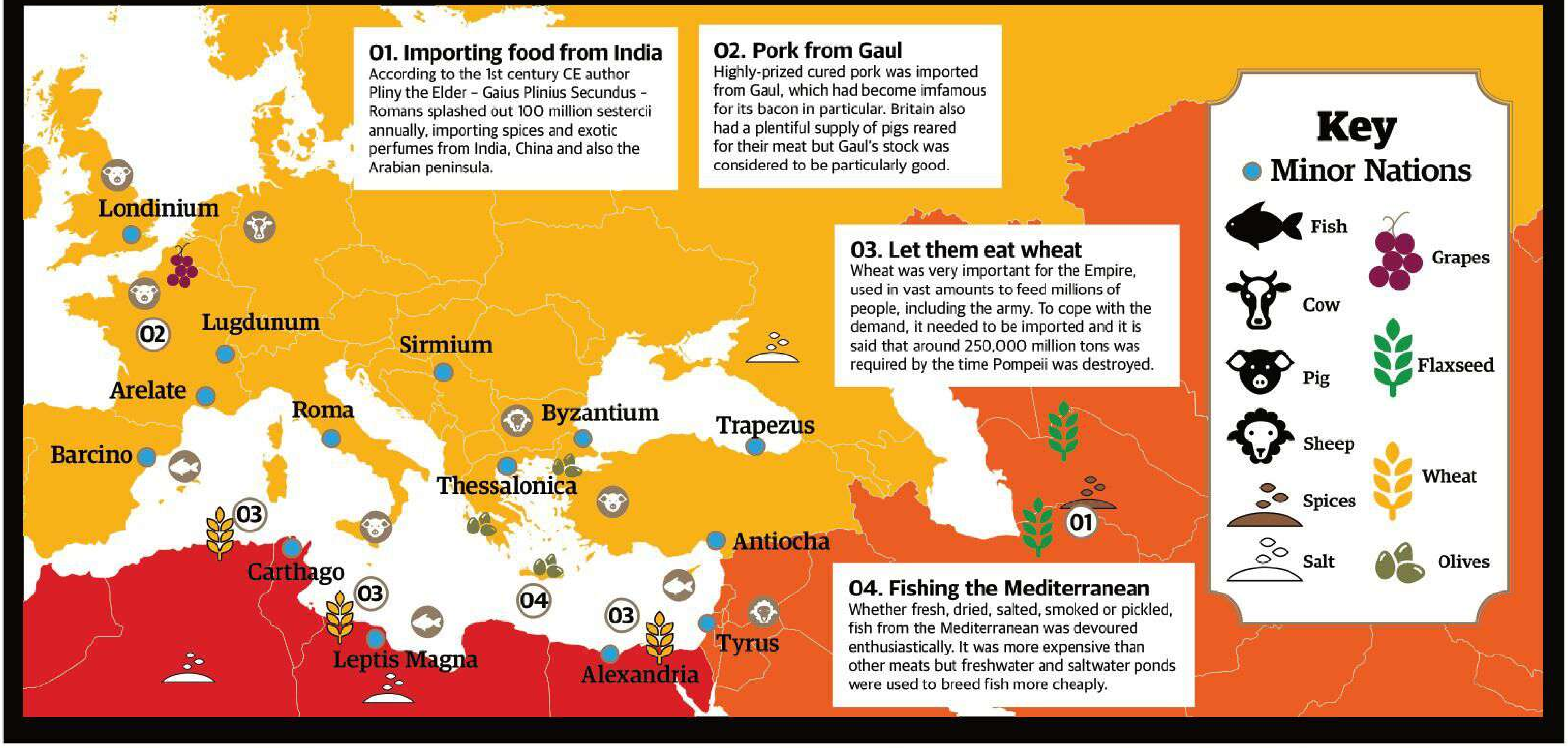
While the rich indulged their taste buds with an array of mouth-watering foods, brought to them by slaves, the diet of the poor was rather more bland. Most were unable to enjoy the sauces, expensive meats and imported spices that the aristocrats digested, so made do with cheaper alternatives.

The poor would rely on the staples of cereal, olive oil and wine and supplement it with bread, lentils, vegetables and porridge. Flat, round loaves made by cereal grain called "emmer" were popular, but later bread made from wheat was introduced. Women would also grind grain into flour in thrusting mills, although there is evidence of animal-driven mills attached to bakeries such as in Pompeii and Ostia.

Farmers, hunters and fishermen had better diets and thanks to no religious restrictions, anything could be consumed. Cured pork was popular, while beef was much less common.

Roman citizens would eat their meals three times a day. They would have breakfast (*jentaculum*) in the morning, lunch (*prandium*) at roughly midday and dinner (*cena*) in the evening. This would be the main meal and the highlight of many days. A lot of effort went into producing the best dinner possible with the resources that were available.

Dinner parties were a popular affair for the patricians, and infamously, they would recline on couches in order to relax as they ate and savoured each mouthful. Stuffed dormouse was a particular delicacy enjoyed by the rich, sprinkled with honey and poppy seeds. Due to the lack of cutlery, the Romans would eat with their hands, so the food had to be conveniently presented. At dinner parties it was considered impolite to eat with your left hand.

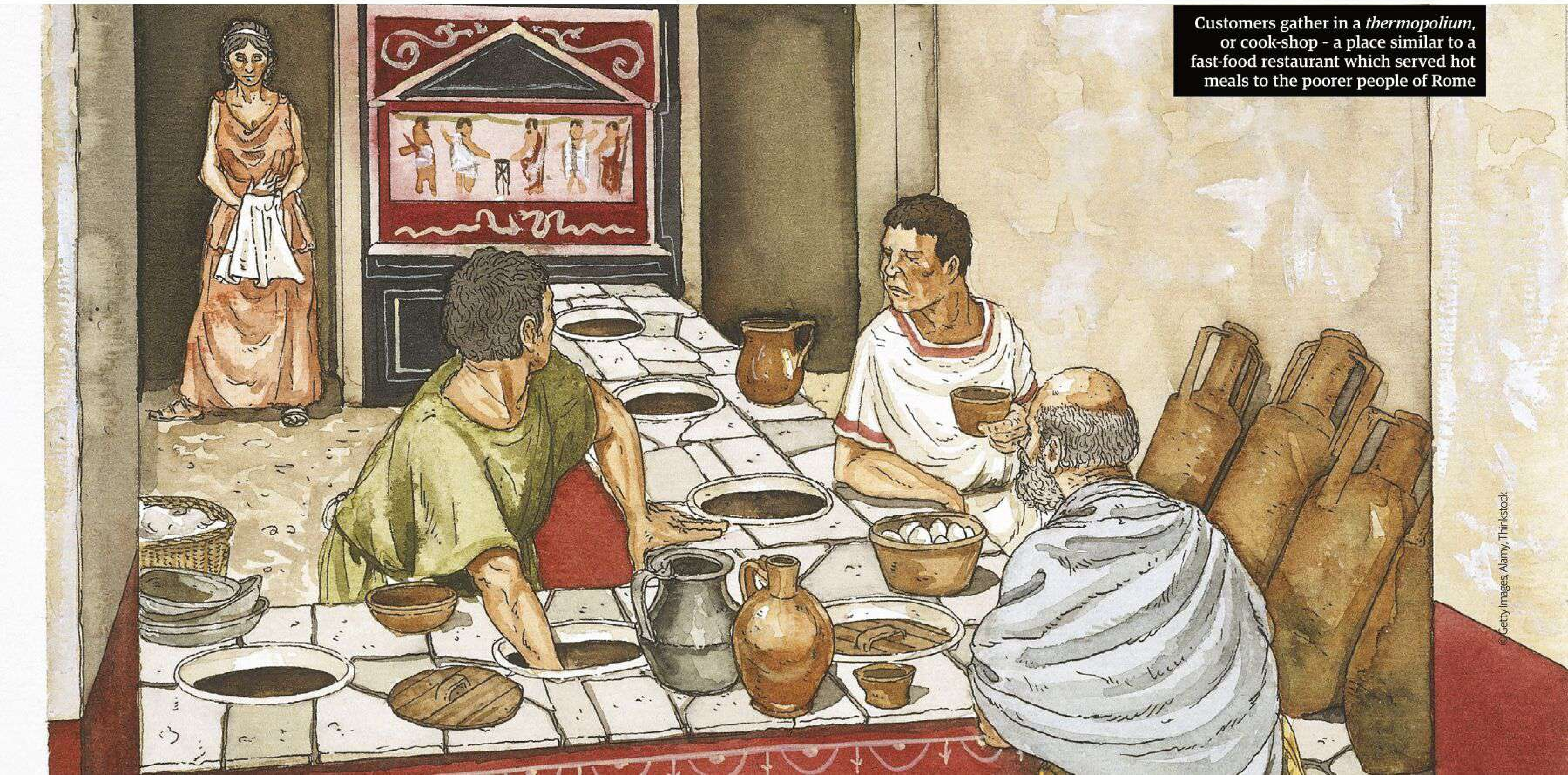


01. Importing food from India
According to the 1st century CE author Pliny the Elder – Gaius Plinius Secundus – Romans splashed out 100 million sestercii annually, importing spices and exotic perfumes from India, China and also the Arabian peninsula.

02. Pork from Gaul
Highly-prized cured pork was imported from Gaul, which had become imfamous for its bacon in particular. Britain also had a plentiful supply of pigs reared for their meat but Gaul's stock was considered to be particularly good.

03. Let them eat wheat
Wheat was very important for the Empire, used in vast amounts to feed millions of people, including the army. To cope with the demand, it needed to be imported and it is said that around 250,000 million tons was required by the time Pompeii was destroyed.

04. Fishing the Mediterranean
Whether fresh, dried, salted, smoked or pickled, fish from the Mediterranean was devoured enthusiastically. It was more expensive than other meats but freshwater and saltwater ponds were used to breed fish more cheaply.



Customers gather in a *thermopolium*, or cook-shop – a place similar to a fast-food restaurant which served hot meals to the poorer people of Rome

© Getty Images; Alamy; Thinkstock

Day in the life

A domestic slave in Ancient Rome

An empire built on forced labour, Rome, 27 BCE – 395 CE

During the Roman Empire, up to a third of the population of Rome consisted of slaves. These men, women and children had often been captured in battle, and were then bought by wealthy Romans to work for them in exchange for basic food and lodging. As well as providing manual labour and domestic duties, such as cleaning, cooking and transport services, slaves were also considered a symbol of wealth for Rome's elite, and so the more servants a man owned, the greater his social standing. A very rich man could own as many as 500 slaves, while an emperor could have 20,000. Living conditions for a slave were brutal, and they lived relatively short lives as a result of this.

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Get up

Slaves were expected to be up at dawn and dress in linen or wool tunics and wooden shoes issued by their master. Their outfits were similar to those of Roman citizens, but when the Senate once suggested the idea of a slave uniform, it was rejected for fear that the slaves may revolt if they could easily see just how large their numbers were.

Do the chores

A slave's day began with lighting fires for the under-floor heating, fetching water and preparing the master's breakfast. Once the master was awake, they would wash and dress them and serve their morning meal, all while being seen and not heard. The slaves themselves would receive meagre rations of bread, fruit and cheap wine to set them up for the day.

Teams of slaves would help their masters to get ready in the morning

Start work

Household slaves would spend the majority of their days cooking, cleaning and running errands, such as taking the children to school, buying groceries and repairing clothes. Some were treated well in recognition of their hard work, but they still had no right to own anything or have a family. Skilled slaves could also work as teachers, accountants, doctors and musicians, sometimes for minimal pay.

Slaves were bought and sold at market, priced depending on their age and skill level

The major slave rebellions were known as the Servile Wars

Rebel

Tired of having no rights to freedom, the slaves of Rome staged three separate rebellions, but were defeated every time. The most famous revolt was led by Spartacus between 73 and 71 BCE, and ended in his death and 6,000 of his followers being recaptured. However, some slaves preferred to use more subtle methods of resistance, such as embezzling their master's money.

Be punished

If a slave was caught misbehaving or simply did something their master didn't approve of, they could be whipped, chained, tortured and even killed with no legal repercussions. The Roman equestrian Publius Vedius Pollio was well known for his particularly cruel method of punishing his slaves: feeding them alive to his pet lamprey eels.

Prepare a feast

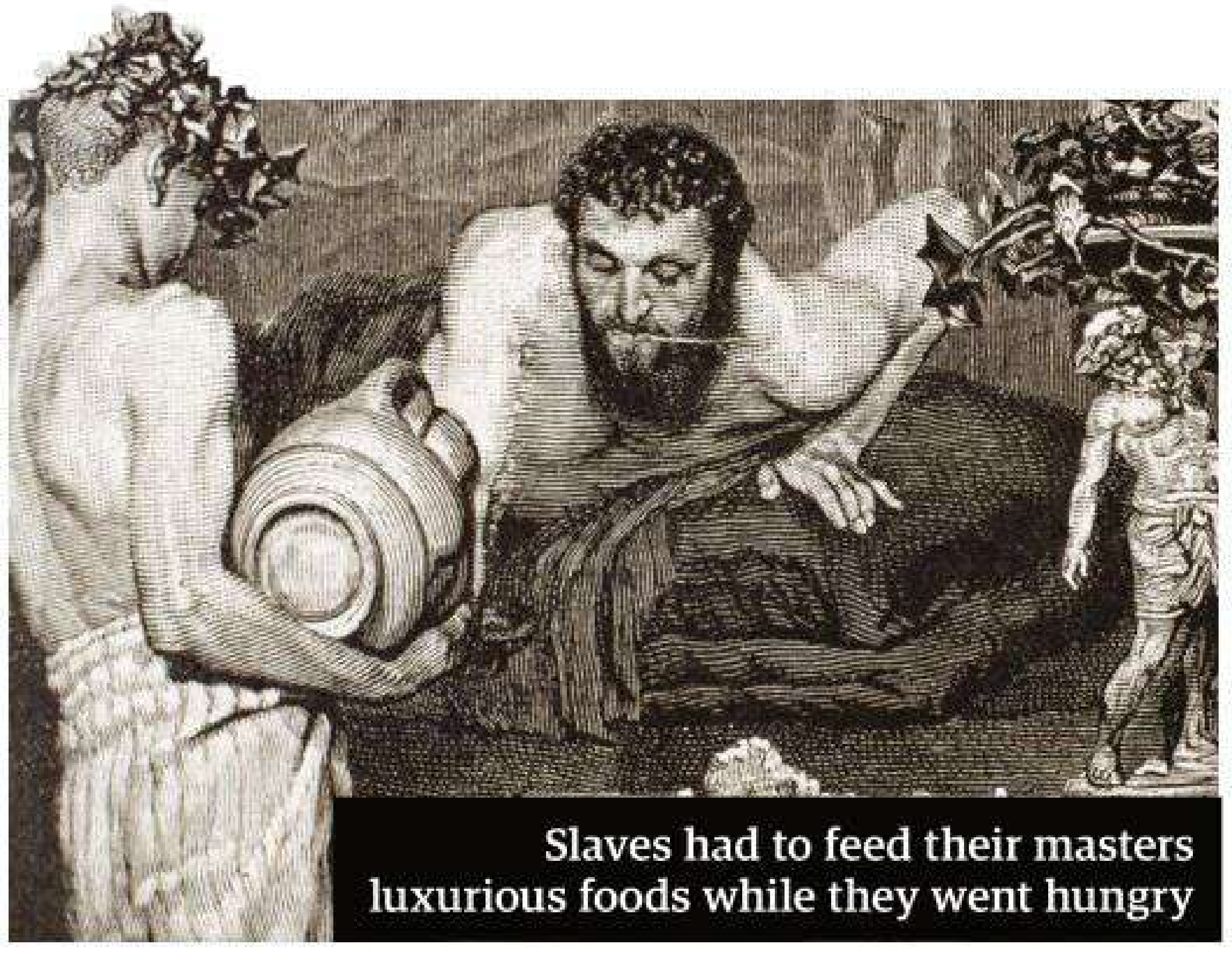
If their master was invited to a banquet, slaves would be tasked with carrying him there in a portable bed called a litter. Meanwhile, the slaves of the banquet's host would be busy preparing the feast. Once the guests had arrived, it would then be the slaves' job to serve them food, provide the entertainment, and clean up afterwards.

Swap roles

During the Roman festival of Saturnalia, an annual celebration of the deity Saturn, it was common for slaves and their masters to switch places. For the seven days of festivities beginning on 17 December, masters would serve their slaves lavish banquets, permit them to gamble, and even swap clothes with them, all in the spirit of goodwill.

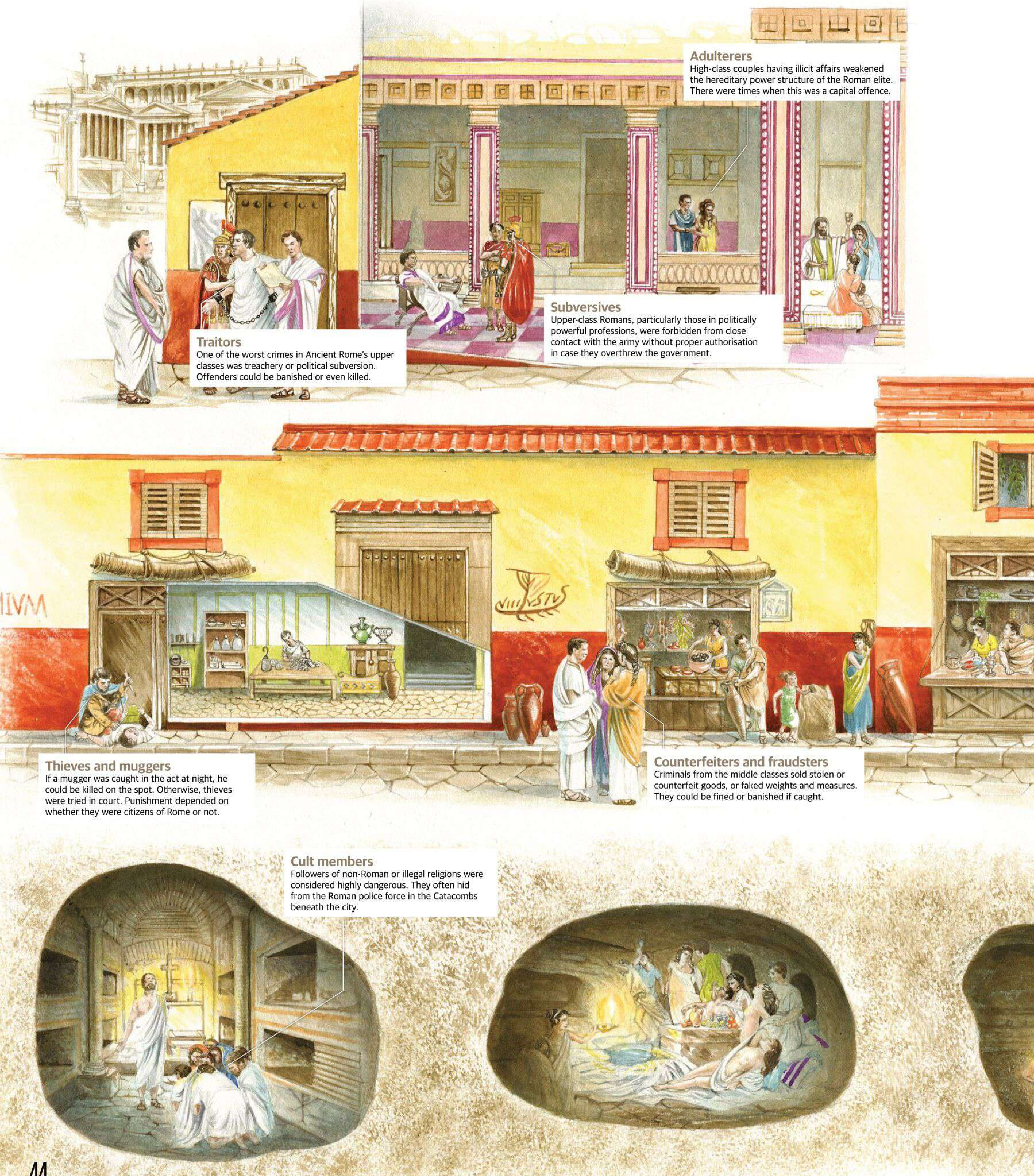
Buy freedom

Slaves could only be set free by their owner in a process called manumission, or by buying their own freedom, enabling them to become Roman citizens but not hold public office. However, this was a rare occurrence, so many would resort to escaping, killing their masters or even killing themselves to avoid a life of abuse as a slave.



Slaves had to feed their masters luxurious foods while they went hungry

© Alamy



Adulterers
High-class couples having illicit affairs weakened the hereditary power structure of the Roman elite. There were times when this was a capital offence.

Subversives
Upper-class Romans, particularly those in politically powerful professions, were forbidden from close contact with the army without proper authorisation in case they overthrew the government.

Traitors
One of the worst crimes in Ancient Rome's upper classes was treachery or political subversion. Offenders could be banished or even killed.

Thieves and muggers
If a mugger was caught in the act at night, he could be killed on the spot. Otherwise, thieves were tried in court. Punishment depended on whether they were citizens of Rome or not.

Counterfeiters and fraudsters
Criminals from the middle classes sold stolen or counterfeit goods, or faked weights and measures. They could be fined or banished if caught.

Cult members
Followers of non-Roman or illegal religions were considered highly dangerous. They often hid from the Roman police force in the Catacombs beneath the city.

Underworld of Ancient Rome

From the Senate to the streets, crime was rife in Ancient Rome. From escaped slaves to treacherous aristocrats, discover the extent of Roman villainy

Ancient Rome had a problem with crime. Robberies were common, so was violence and rioting. Merchants cheated their customers; desperate slaves escaped regularly and joined other outlaws in their hiding places beneath the city. At the top level of society, the wealthy and aristocratic were often embroiled in secret or subversive plots. From the top to the bottom the city was riddled with criminal activity.

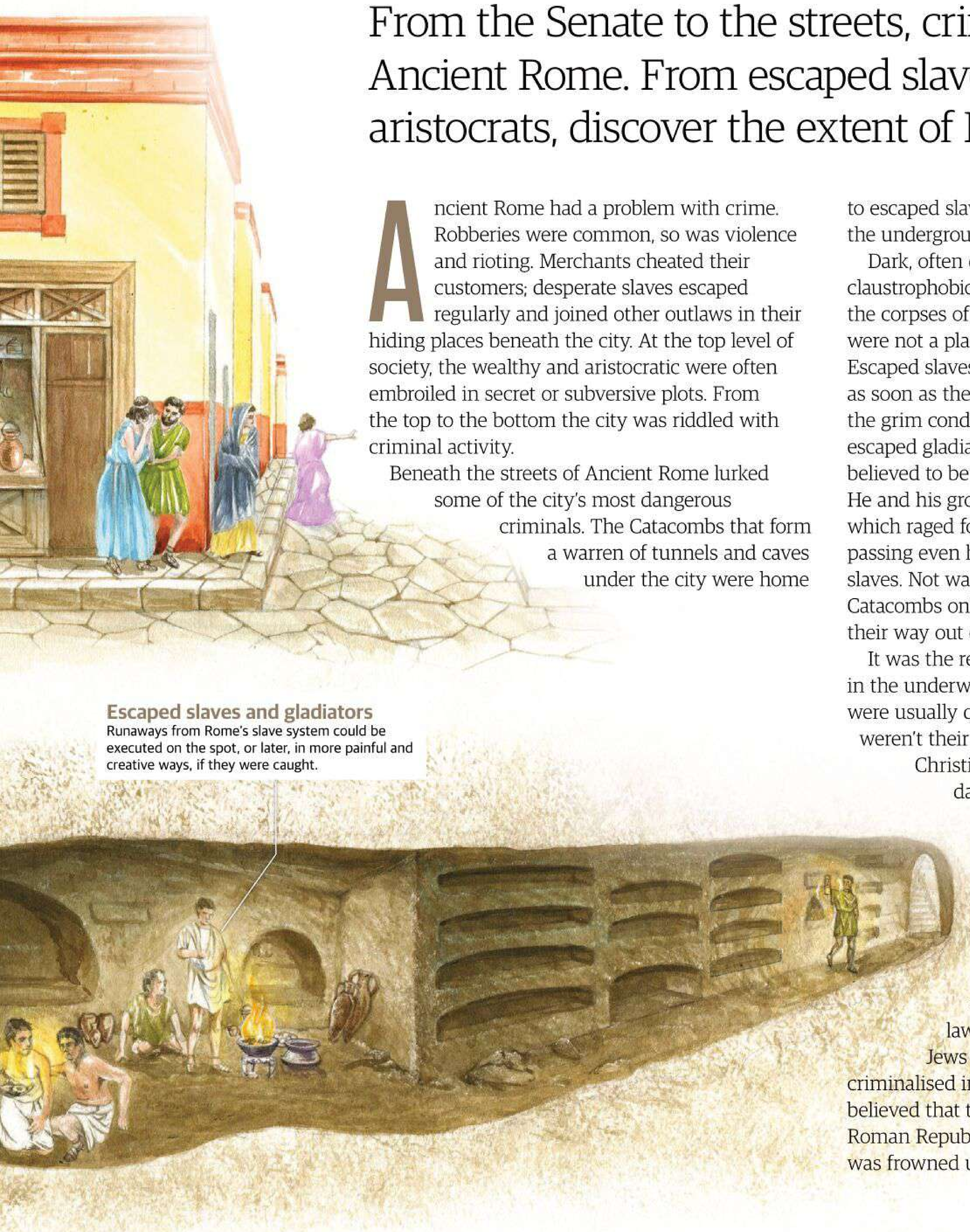
Beneath the streets of Ancient Rome lurked some of the city's most dangerous criminals. The Catacombs that form a warren of tunnels and caves under the city were home to escaped slaves and outlawed religions that used the underground labyrinth as a hiding place.

Dark, often damp, riddled with vermin, claustrophobically small in places and stacked with the corpses of previous inhabitants, the Catacombs were not a place where people would want to stay. Escaped slaves would want to move on from there as soon as they could, and not just because of the grim conditions. In 71 BCE Rome crucified an escaped gladiator called Spartacus who was widely believed to be the ringleader of a group of escapees. He and his group had caused the Third Servile War, which raged for two years and resulted in Rome passing even harsher sentences against escaped slaves. Not wanting to be caught, slaves used the Catacombs only as a temporary hiding place on their way out of the city.

It was the religious cults that tended to stay in the underworld of the Catacombs. Romans were usually quite open-minded about gods who weren't their own, but some religions – Judaism, Christianity and Bacchanalia – followed dangerous ideologies that didn't coincide with Roman values.

Bacchanalia was a Greek religion that the Romans had adopted. Its followers celebrated their god Bacchus with wild drunken orgies, and it was rumoured that they would murder those who refused to participate. In 186 BCE a law was passed against Bacchanalia.

Jews and Christians, meanwhile, were criminalised in Ancient Rome because they believed that there was only one god. During the Roman Republic, with its pantheon of gods, this was frowned upon, but by the time Rome became

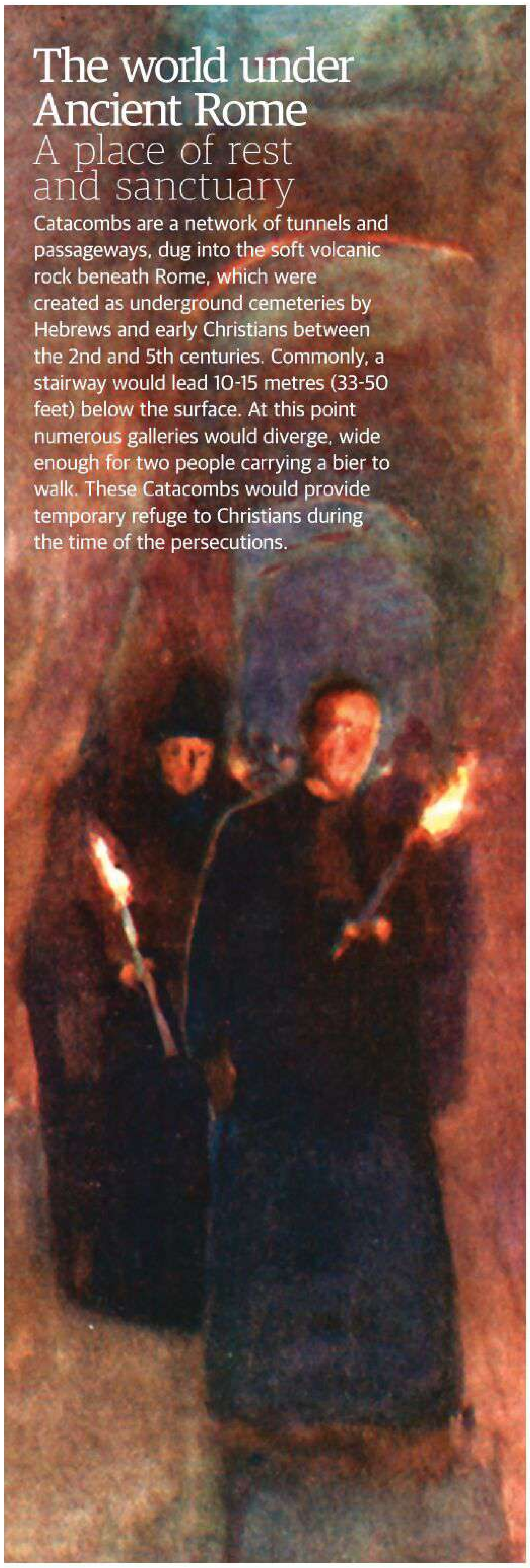


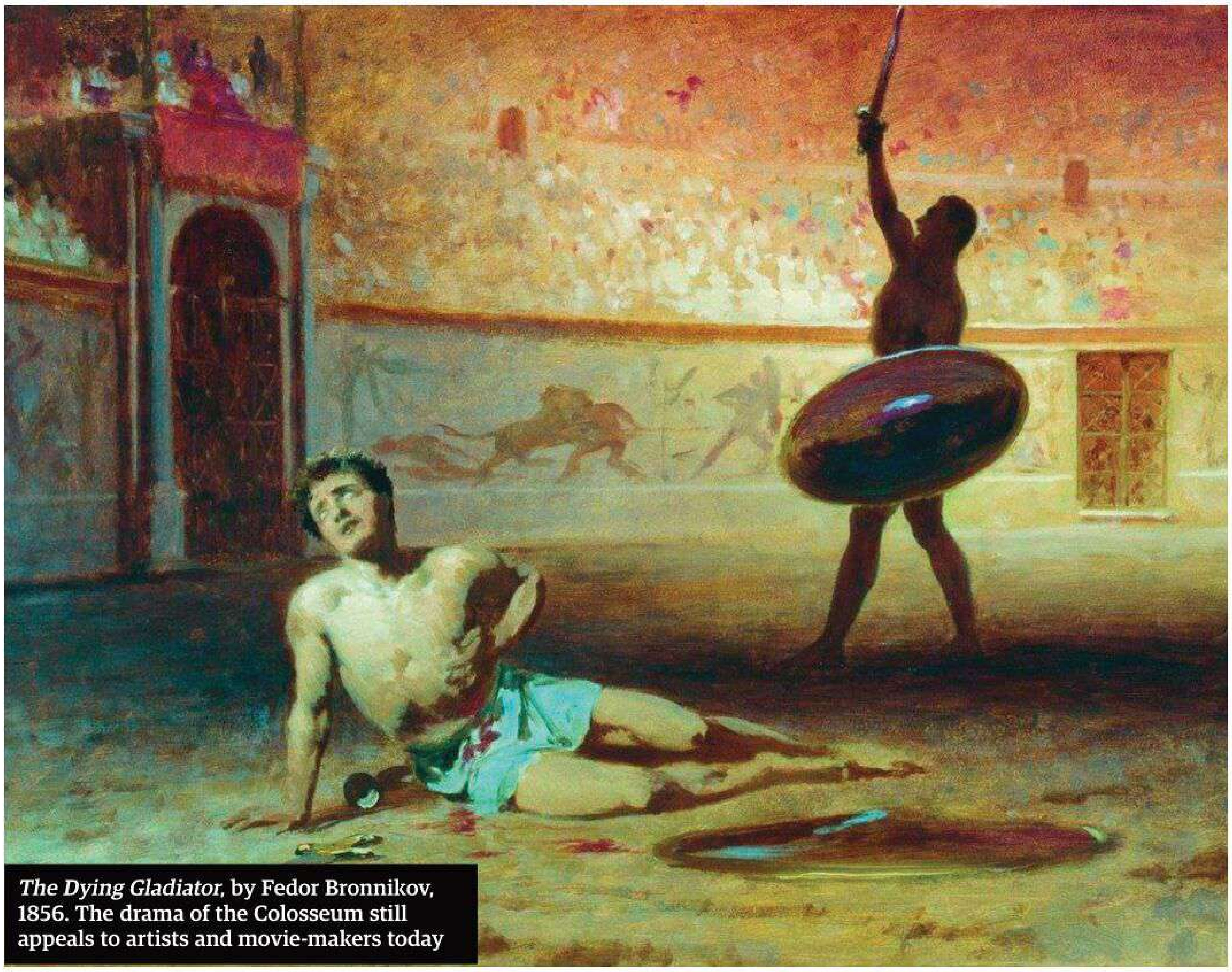
Escaped slaves and gladiators
Runaways from Rome's slave system could be executed on the spot, or later, in more painful and creative ways, if they were caught.

The world under Ancient Rome

A place of rest and sanctuary

Catacombs are a network of tunnels and passageways, dug into the soft volcanic rock beneath Rome, which were created as underground cemeteries by Hebrews and early Christians between the 2nd and 5th centuries. Commonly, a stairway would lead 10-15 metres (33-50 feet) below the surface. At this point numerous galleries would diverge, wide enough for two people carrying a bier to walk. These Catacombs would provide temporary refuge to Christians during the time of the persecutions.





The Dying Gladiator, by Fedor Bronnikov, 1856. The drama of the Colosseum still appeals to artists and movie-makers today

> "Obscure symbols helped other criminals to navigate the Catacombs, showing them which path to follow in the dark, stinking labyrinth"

an Empire it was an active threat to national security. Rome's last dictator, Julius Caesar, was deified when he died, his heir Augustus inherited the title *Divi Filius* or "son of a god". Judaism and Christianity threatened this idea of divine emperor, and their followers fled underground.

There's remains evidence in the Catacombs of the life that these people lived. Often they would carve or paint their religious symbols onto the walls. Jews often painted images of themselves performing their rites, or of the menorah – the seven-branched candlestick that is often used to represent their faith. Christians were different. Knowing that they were the most-hated religious criminals and that Rome's riot police would sometimes pursue them even as far as the Catacombs, the Christians used a range of cryptic signs such as stylised fish, Chi Ro symbols and "sator squares" – coded word games that secretly spelled out a prayer – rather than the obvious cross/crucifix. These obscure symbols helped other criminals navigate the Catacombs, showing them which path to follow in the dark, vile labyrinth. The only reason they stayed near the city was that they believed they should spread their faith to be rewarded for their sufferings in the afterlife.

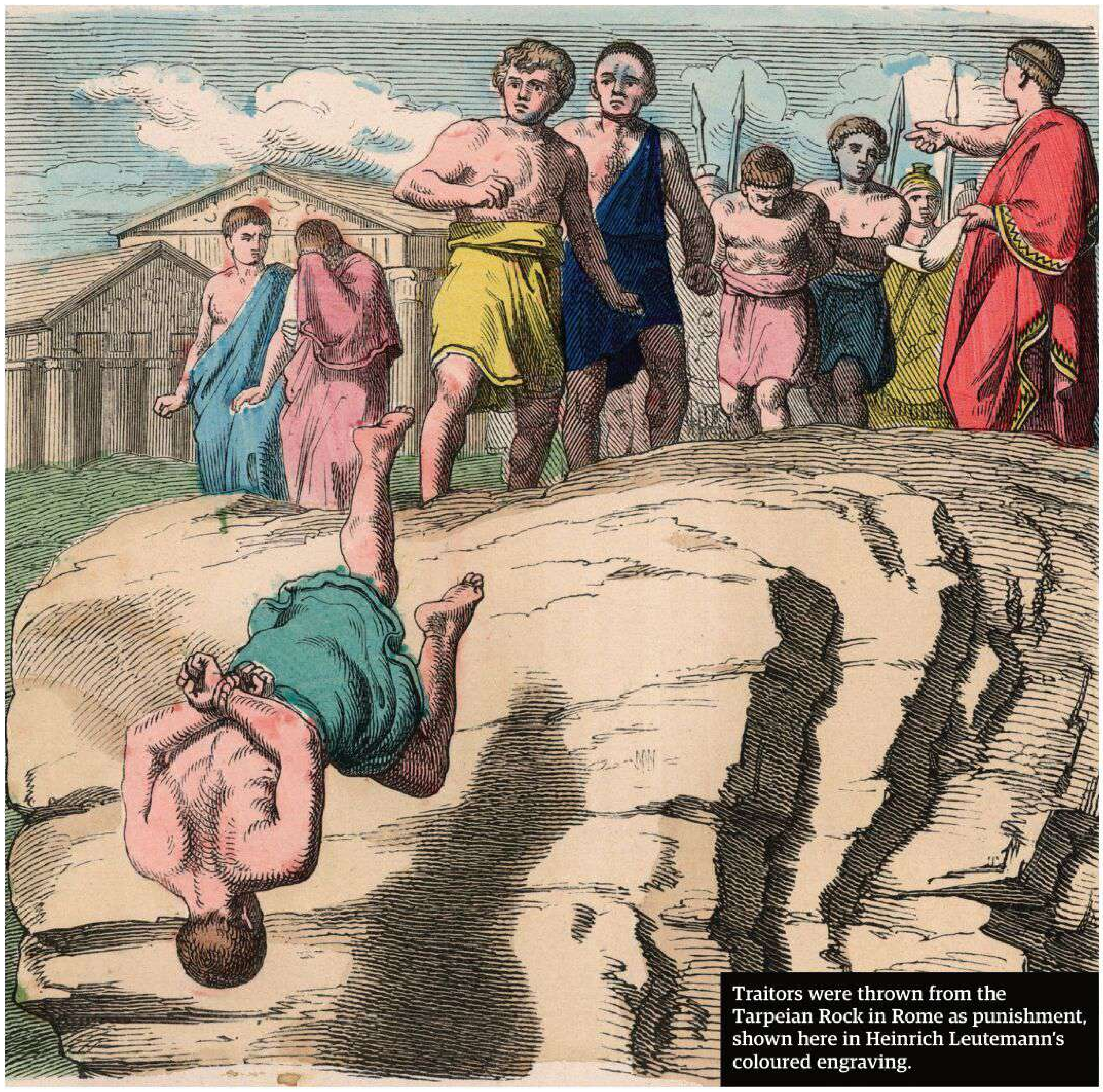
Crime wasn't limited to the literal underworld though. Roman street crime would be familiar to anyone who watches today's news. Popular articles about graffiti, theft, disorder and violent crime were as common in Ancient Rome as news reports about antisocial behaviour in deprived inner-city areas today. Roman sources like the poet Juvenal describe everything from nuisance noise, rowdy crowds and littering to mugging and burglary.

Walking down an ordinary street in Rome meant walking among a gamut of muggers and thieves. The public roads were noisy and crowded, making pick-pocketing easy – a thief could grab or cut a purse from their victim's belt and be off into the crowd before they had even been noticed. Several servants or guards, in the hope of deterring would-be muggers, would often accompany higher-class Romans into the lower-class areas. This caused its own problems for ordinary city dwellers, who would frequently complain about being barged out of the way and knocked over. The streets were littered with rotting produce and human sewage, which ordinary householders would dispose of from their upstairs windows. Being knocked sprawling into the street was also an open invitation for thieves to attack, under the guise of helping the victim to their feet.

The city's poorer inhabitants – members of the "plebeian" underclass – made up the criminals of the lower-class streets. They were typically poor and underfed – vinegar and beans was their dinner – so their motivation for criminality wasn't greed, but need. Ordinary working Romans had been complaining of poverty and dejection and contrasting their bitter lot with the better lives of the higher classes from the very beginning of the Empire. With such a level of poverty and social disaffection, it's no wonder many of the lower classes turned to crime just to survive. Even a few coins stolen from one of their peers would buy some better food, or some cheap wine to help them momentarily forget their poverty.

Drinking led to another set of problems however: drunken violence. Juvenal, discussing his own mugging in his third Satire, seems just as offended to be accosted by a drunken lout as he is about being robbed. Public drunkenness was often the root cause of the mobs and rioting that periodically plagued Ancient Rome – setting fires, looting goods and produce and damaging property. For this reason the Emperor Augustus set up two police forces in the later years of his reign. The *vigiles urbani* were the City Watch – a security service that doubled as the city's fire service – while the *cohortes urbanae* functioned as the riot police.

Every so often the police forces would be ordered to clear the lower-class criminals out of a particular area in the city or the countryside and villages immediately around it. Low-level criminality was so ensconced in plebeian Roman society that often the only effect this had was to move the problem from area to area, mostly in the poor districts. But the middle classes had their own criminal element – they committed more considered and more lucrative crimes.



Traitors were thrown from the Tarpeian Rock in Rome as punishment, shown here in Heinrich Leutemann's coloured engraving.

Cheating, swindling and counterfeiting went on in Rome's streets and markets on a daily basis. Ancient Rome had its own versions of our cheap designer fakes, payday loan scams and food scares. Counterfeit coins and jewellery were a problem in the city. Some merchants would bulk out their grain with gravel or top up wine with seawater. Others leant money out at illegally high rates and took their debtors for everything they owned. Depending on their social standing, these merchants and moneylenders could be sentenced to a range of punishments, from a public lashing to the payment of compensation.

The merchants were better educated and more organised than the lower-class street criminals. Rather than acting on impulse, they carefully planned both their crimes and how they would deal with getting caught. It was common for middle-class Roman traders to organise themselves into groups like trade unions, known as *collegia*. While many of these were composed of law-abiding citizens, the odd criminal collegium did exist. The collegia's collective funds and organised legal status meant that they had power and resources that could be employed to get their members out of trouble if necessary. Criminal collegia were the nearest thing that Ancient Rome had to the Mafia and they operated on much the same principle – keep together, stay quiet, and make money. Thanks to the organisation of these guilds, even if a criminal collegium member was caught, he could expect to be able to employ a decent lawyer and get away with a fine, or possibly banishment. If the worst happened and the fine he had to pay reduced him to complete bankruptcy though, he could be forced into slavery to pay off his debt.

> One of the worst crimes to commit in Ancient Rome was patricide, or killing your own father.

Crime didn't stop when it reached the upper echelons of the city either – in fact, the high-class villas of the elite were a hotbed of a different type of criminal activity. Romans of the patrician class had no need to steal or swindle. They were born into the world of inherited wealth that the lower-class longed for and the middle classes aspired to. Their lives were very different from the general population, and so were their crimes. This was especially true during the transition from the Roman Republic to the Roman Empire, when treason became one of the worst offences any Roman could commit. The crimes that are most familiar to us today among the Roman upper classes are of course the plots and assassinations that characterised much of the later Empire. We often think of the Roman upper classes as a hotbed of sedition and plotting, and indeed many did commit treachery in one way or another. Treachery, however, wasn't simply limited to plotting or assassination; it was anything that threatened Rome as a whole – the idea of the "Eternal City" was perhaps more important than the people who lived in it.

Upper-class Romans were just as much at risk of being beguiled by the treacherous new religion of Christianity as the plebeians. Among the male elite there was always the danger that some bright young general or politician might think he could do a better job of ruling the city and its attendant Empire than the current establishment. Some of the worst upper-class Roman crimes included paying bribes to the army and patricide. Patricide meant killing your father or the *paterfamilias* of your family. While this was a shocking crime in all strata of Roman society, it was worst in the patrician class. The head of the household symbolised a kind of mini-Emperor, a symbol of rulership, inheritance and the established order. To violate that was to violate the principles of the Roman Empire. Adultery also became a crime among the ruling elite, because it threatened the family system of inheritance. Crime was a significant problem for the population of Ancient Rome from all walks of life. And while the crimes – and their punishments – all varied in severity, execution and motivation, when it came down to it they all revolved around the same needs and wants: more money, more control, more power.

Rise to power

Find out how Caesar became one of the most ruthless rulers in Roman history

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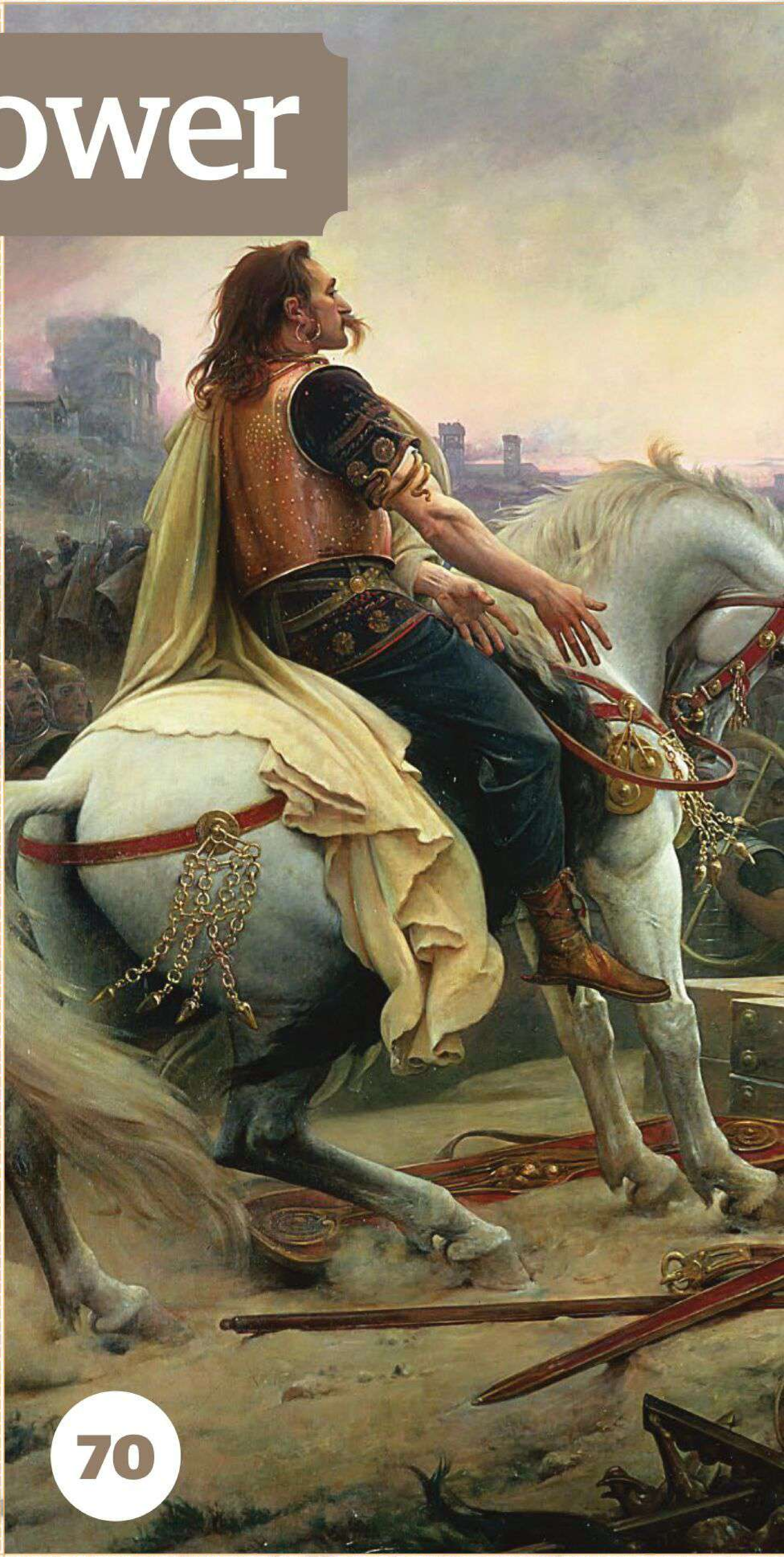
"How one man's ambition and genius transformed Rome from a republic to a dictatorship"



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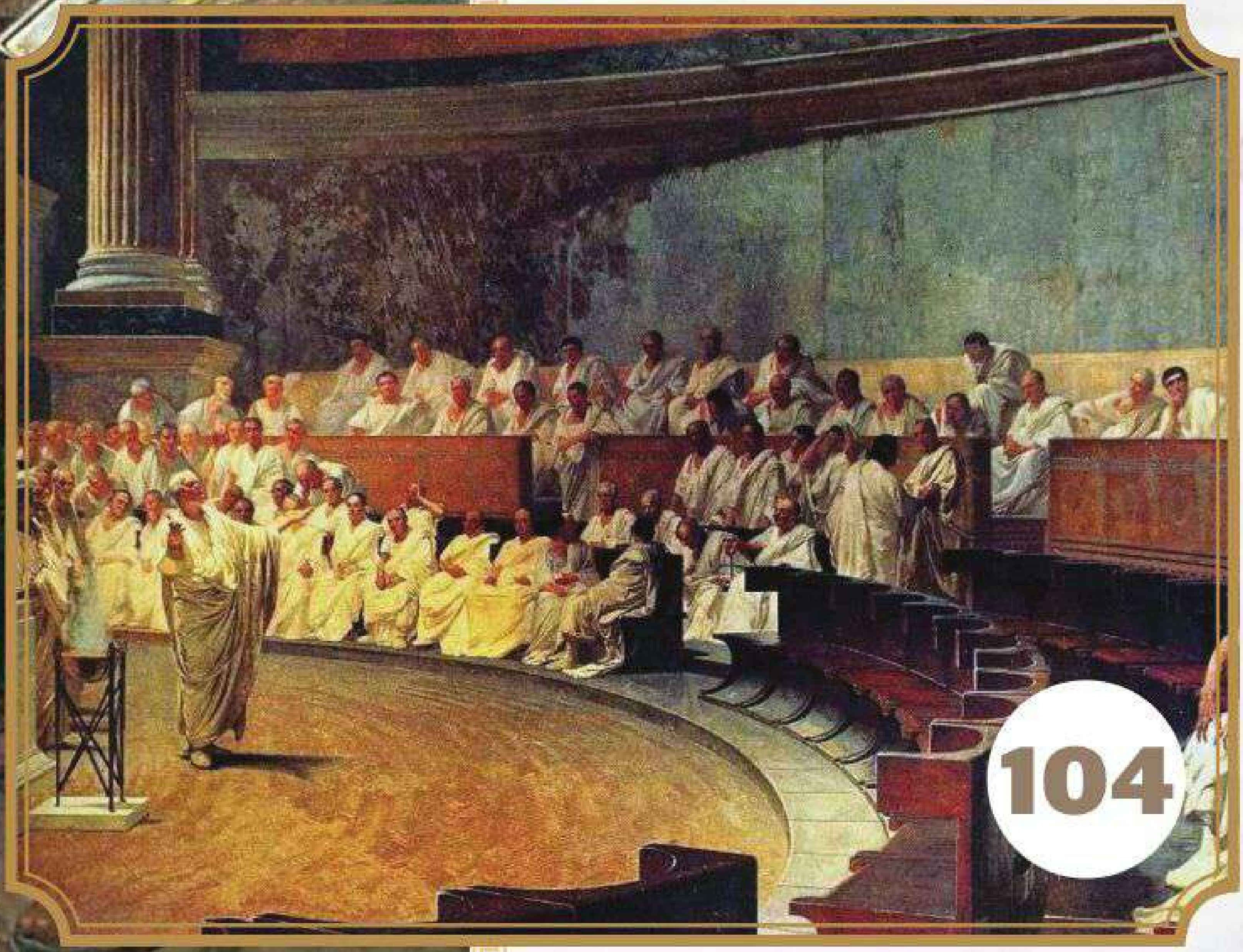

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Caesar's ancestors

Active in the Punic Wars and civil wars, Caesar's family rose to prominence well before he crossed the Rubicon

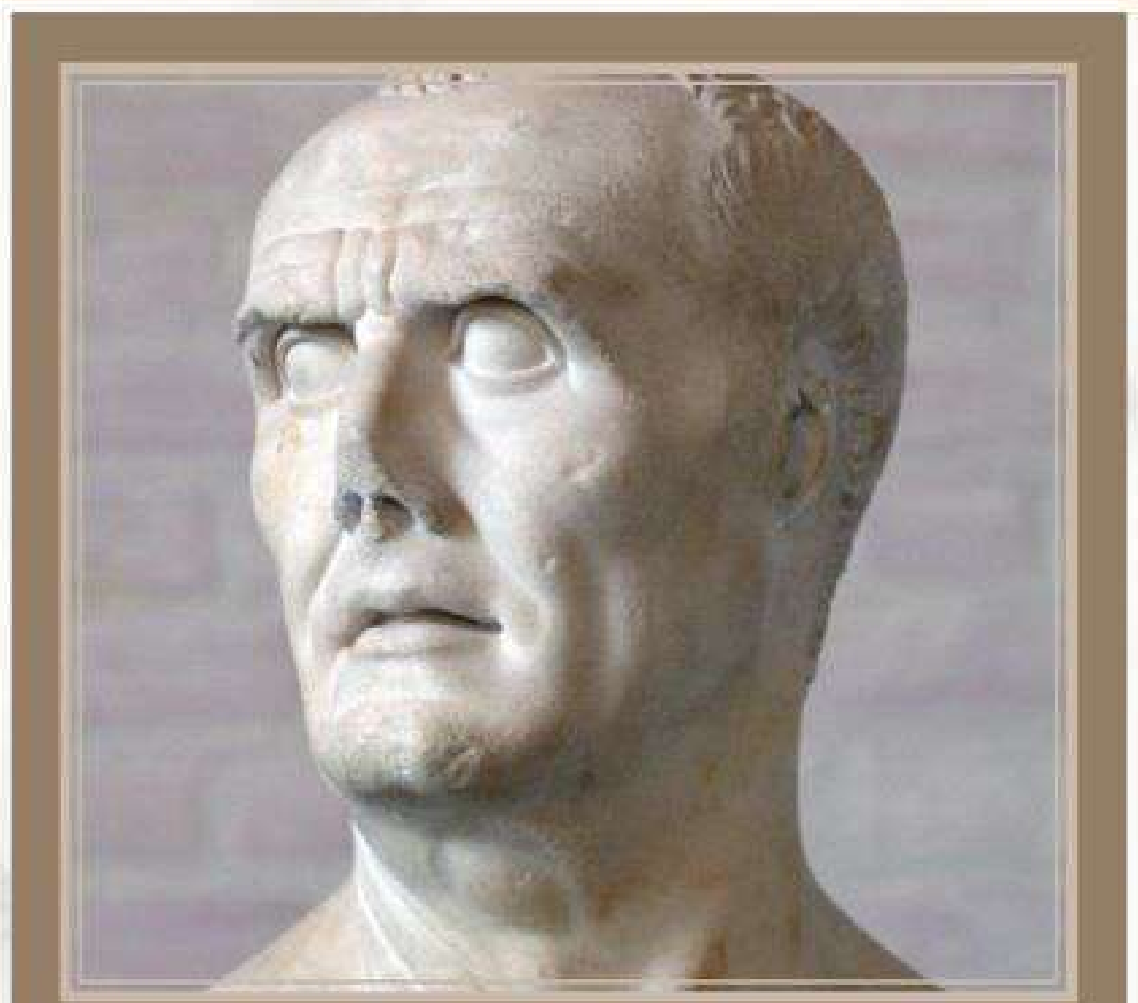
Lucius Julius Caesar I

Gaius Julius Caesar II

Marcia Regia

When Caesar's grandfather married Marcia Regia, it linked his family to one of the oldest noble families who claimed descent from the old Kings of Rome. It was a clever move which gave the Julii Caesares more status in elections to the coveted offices of the Republic.

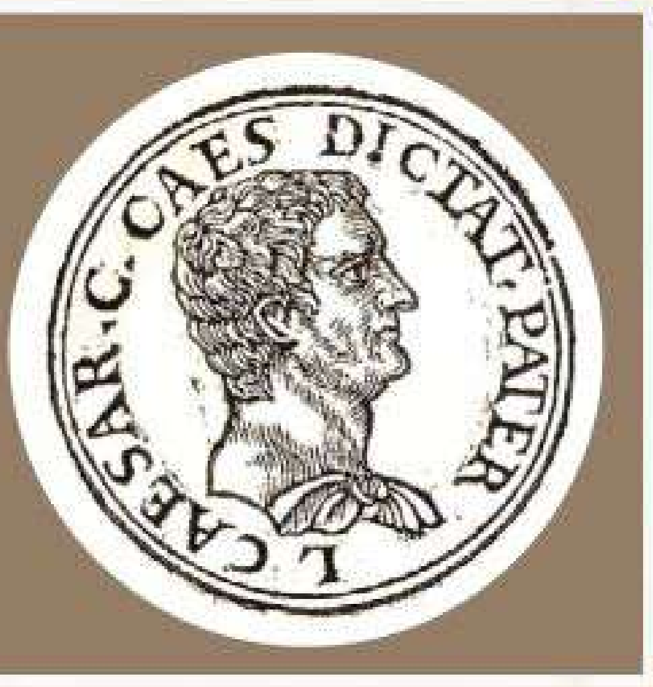
Julia
c.130-69 BCE



Gaius Marius

A generation before Caesar, it was Gaius Marius – an uncle by marriage – who was a successful general who sought political power. Having defeated Germanic barbarians, Marius was elected to the office of consul an unprecedented seven times. Ruthlessly ambitious, his actions paved the way for the collapse of the Republic and the rise of his nephew of 16.

Gaius Julius Caesar III
c.140-85 BCE


L. CAESAR. C. CAES. DICTAT. PATER

The father of Caesar held a number of offices in the Republic including quaestor, praetor and proconsul of Asia, although the exact dates in which he held them are unclear. He died suddenly while putting on his shoes, leaving his son as head of the family at the tender age of 16.

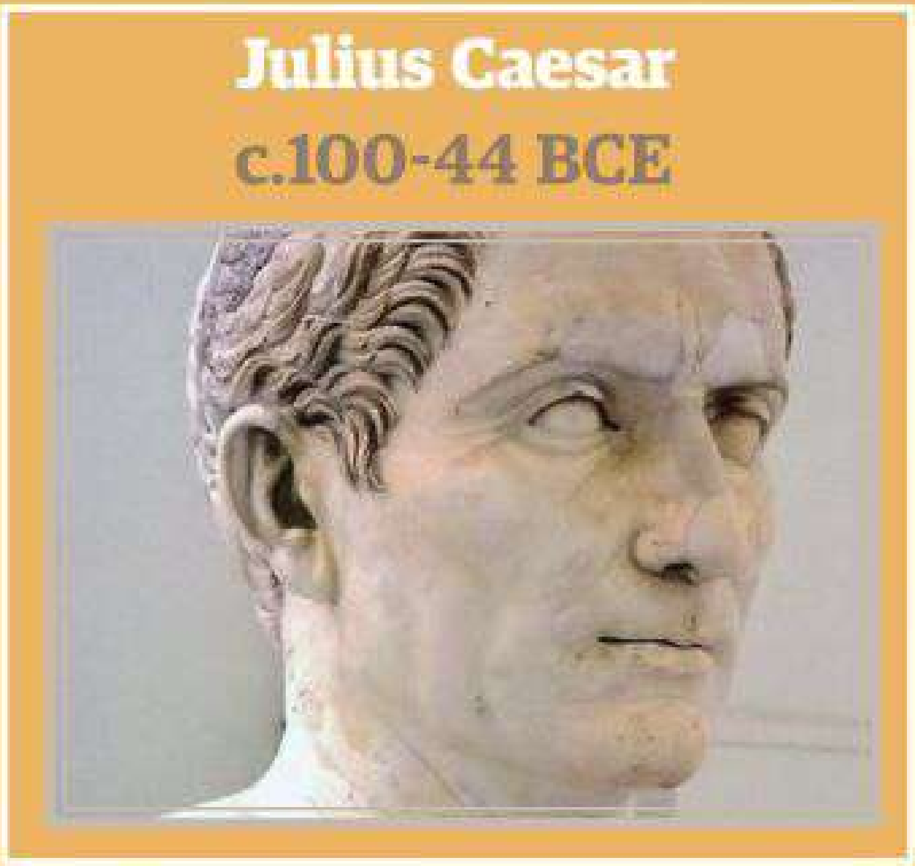
Aurelia Cotta
c.120-54 BCE

Gaius Marius Minor
c.109-82 BCE

Julia Major

Julia Minor
c.101-51 BCE

Julius Caesar
c.100-44 BCE



Sextus Julius Caesar I

The earliest known ancestor of Caesar was his great-great grandfather, Sextus Julius Caesar, who was elected to the office of praetor during the Second Punic War. Sextus was outranked only by the consuls, given the command of a legion and the province of Sicily, and began his family's rise to power.

Key
Married ……
Children ……

Gaius Julius Caesar I

Sextus Julius Caesar II

> "With only an ancient claim to a god, the family clung to their pedigree in name but had little political power"

Lucius Julius Caesar II

Poppilia

Lucius Julius Caesar III
c.135-87 BCE

Gaius Julius Caesar Strabo Vopiscus
c130-87 BCE

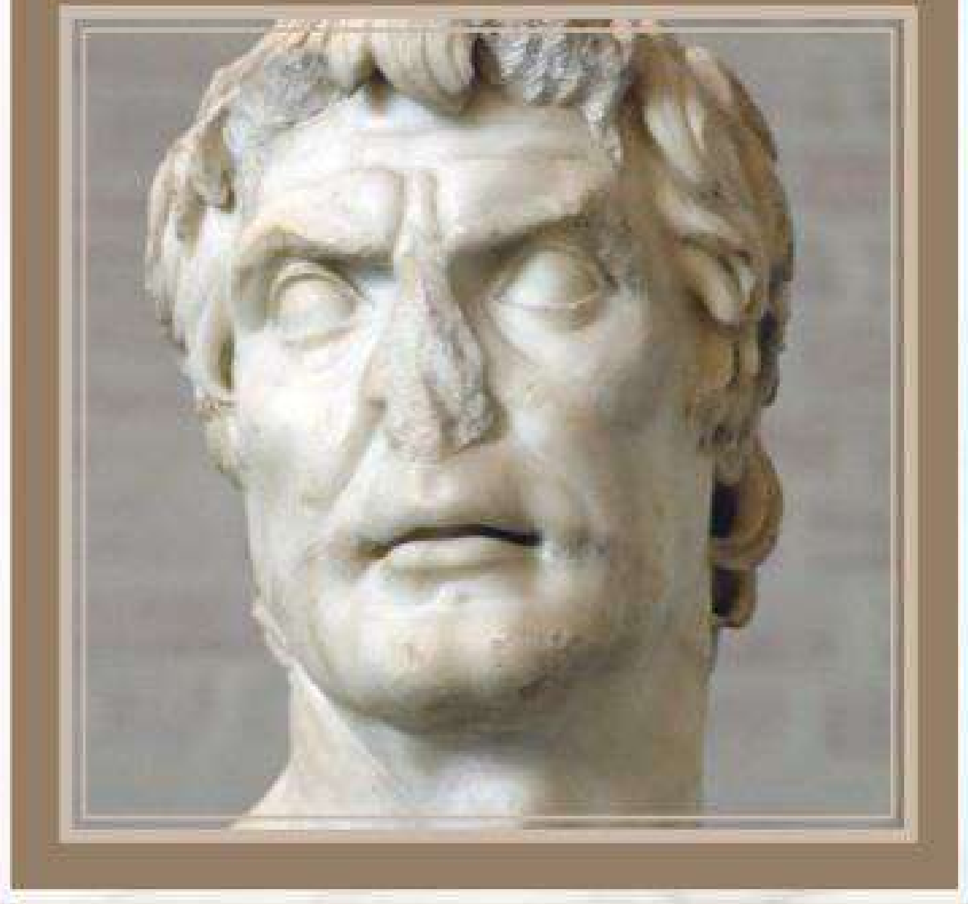
Julia
c.129-104 BCE

Lucius Julius Caesar IV

Julia Antonia
c.104-39 BCE

Lucius Cornelius Sulla Felix
c138-78 BCE

When Gaius Marius tried to remove his distant relative from command of the eastern army, Sulla refused to step down and instead marched on Rome, leading to civil war. After the death of Marius, Sulla seized control of the state and revived the ancient office of dictator – an act repeated by Caesar, the son of his second cousin by marriage, four decades later.

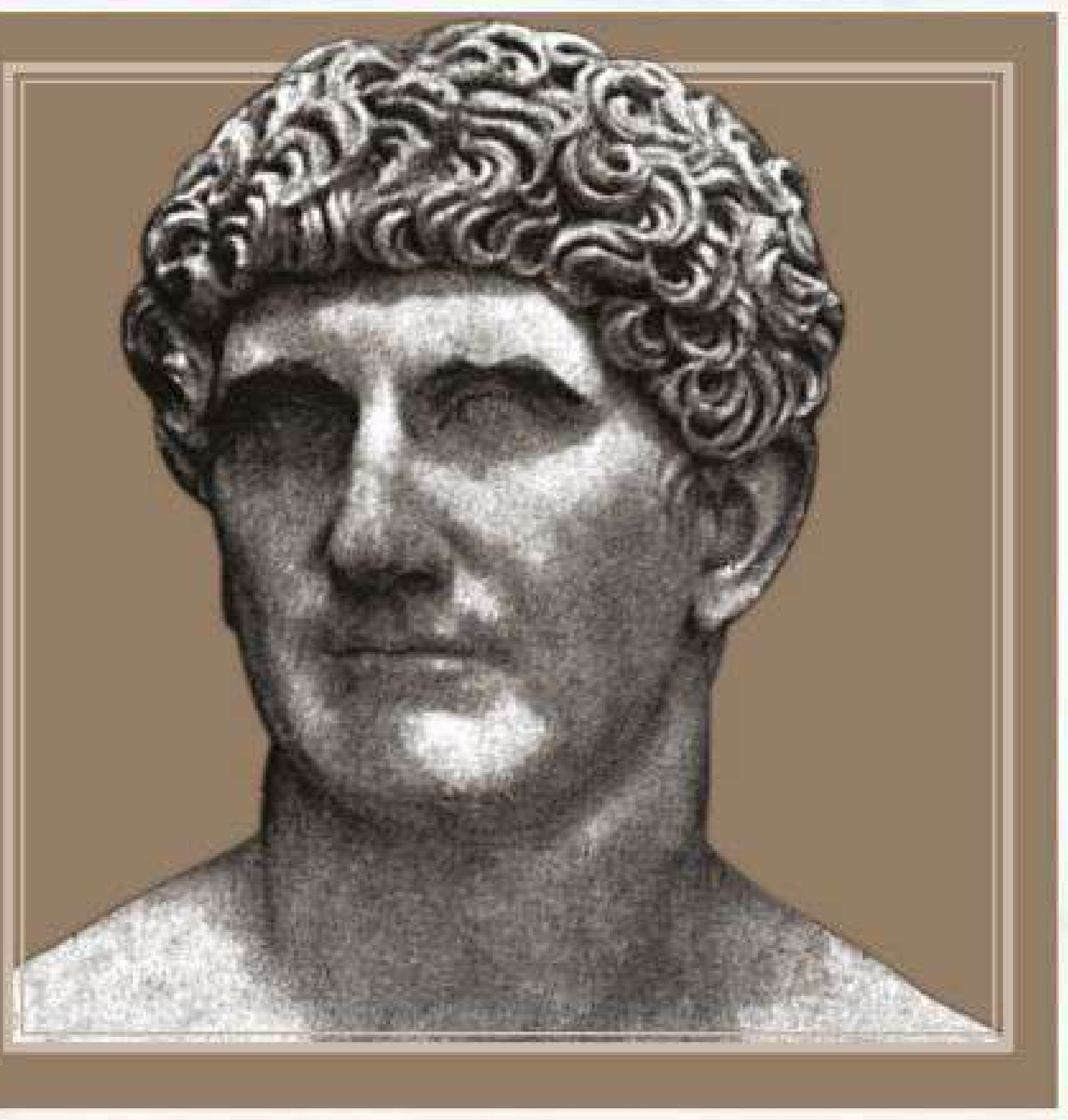


Sextus Julius Caesar III

Sextus Julius Caesar

Mark Antony
c.83- 30 BCE

During Caesar's life, Mark Antony was one of his greatest supporters, perhaps unsurprising considering that they were related – Mark Antony's mother, Julia Antonia, was Caesar's third cousin. Antony served on Caesar's military staff and was appointed as Governor of Italy, before attempting to seize power for himself after Caesar's assassination.



Caesar's descendants

A complex web of marriage, adoption and intrigue ensured that Caesar's family continued to rule Rome after his death

Gaius Julius Caesar III
c140-85 BCE

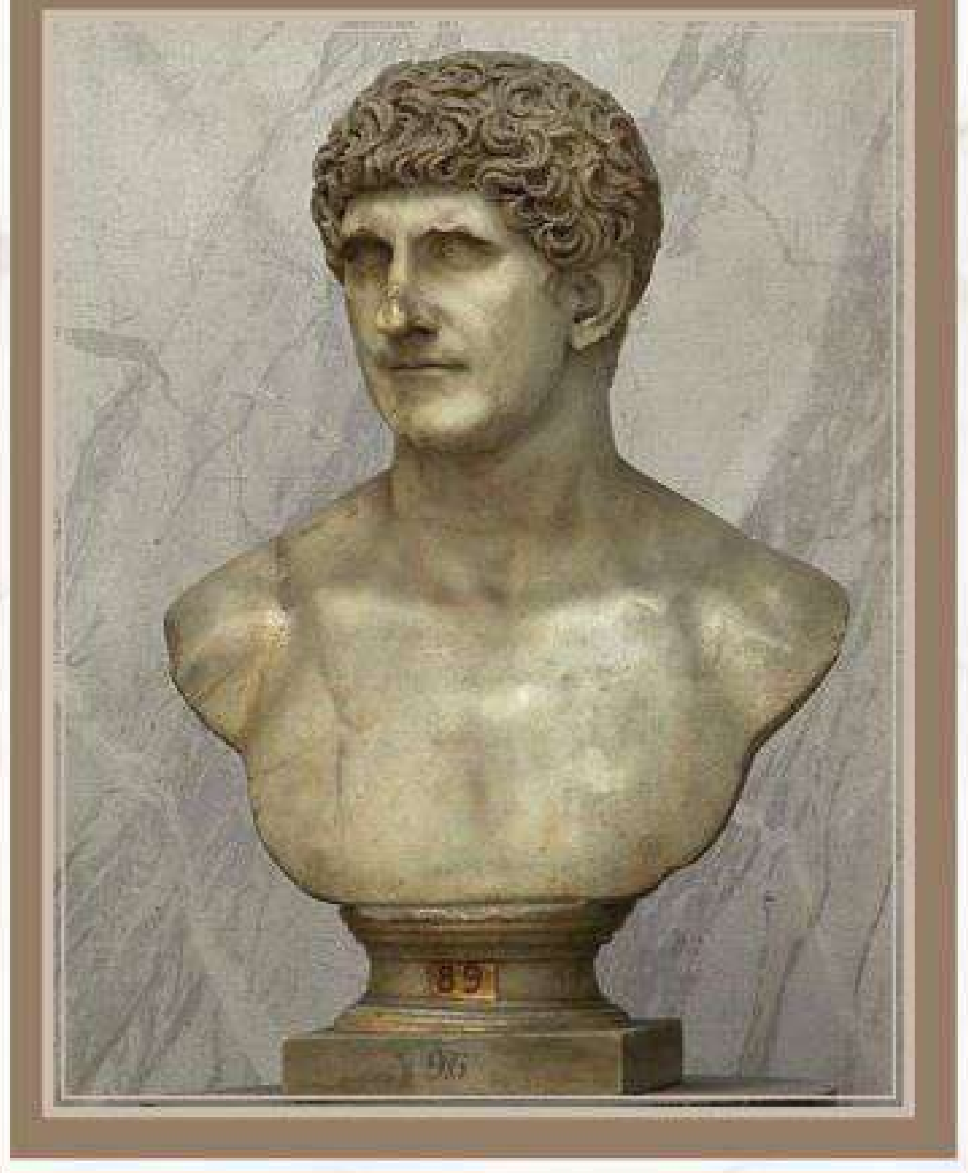
Julia Major

Marcus Atius Balbus
c.105-51 BCE

Atia Balba Caesonia
c.85-43 BCE

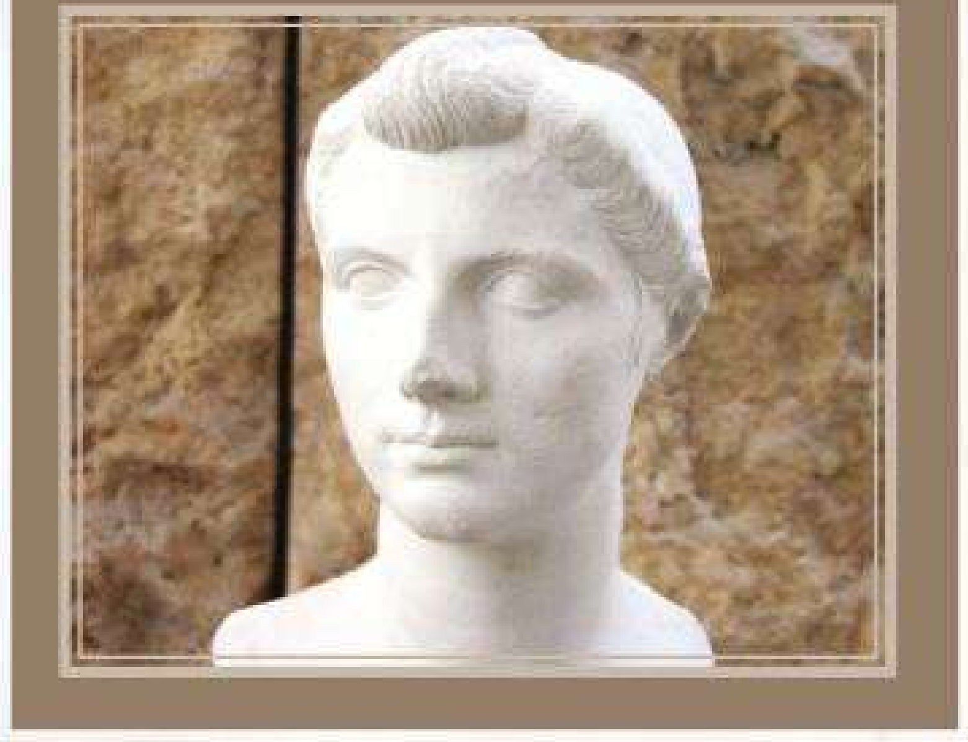
Gaius Octavius
100-59 BCE

Mark Antony
83-30 BCE



Octavia Minor
69 BCE – 11 CE

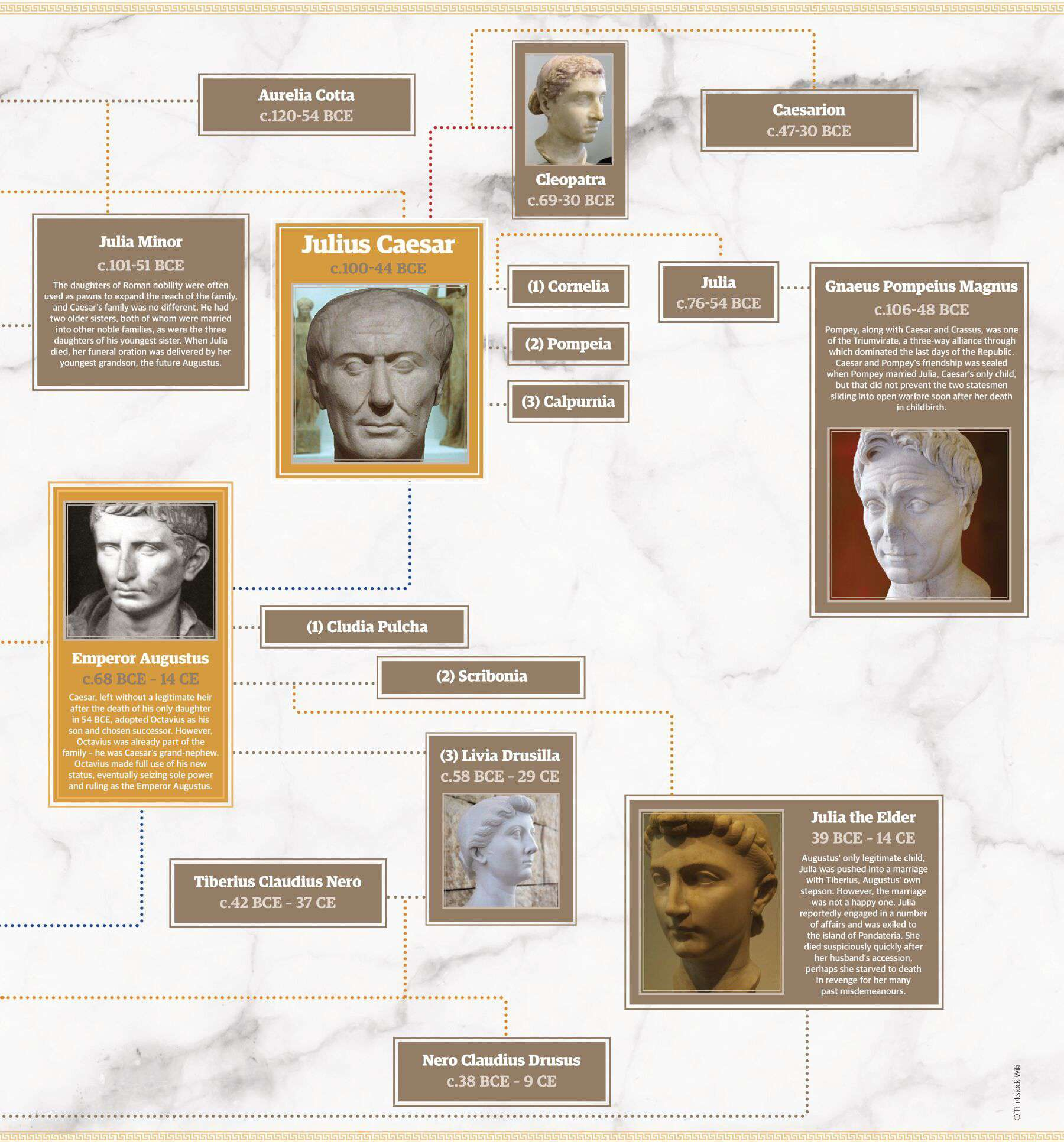
No woman better illustrates the intricate web that made up the Julio-Claudian family than Octavia. She was wife of Mark Antony, sister of Augustus, great-grandmother of Caligula, grandmother of Claudius and, a sign of the incestuous nature of the dynasty, both paternal great-grandmother and maternal great-great grandmother of Nero.



Emperor Tiberius
c.42 BCE – 37 CE

Key
Married ••••••••••••••••
Children ••••••••••••••••
Adopted ••••••••••••••••
Affair ••••••••••••••••

Caesar's descendants



Aurelia Cotta
c.120-54 BCE

Cleopatra
c.69-30 BCE

Caesarion
c.47-30 BCE

Julia Minor
c.101-51 BCE

The daughters of Roman nobility were often used as pawns to expand the reach of the family, and Caesar's family was no different. He had two older sisters, both of whom were married into other noble families, as were the three daughters of his youngest sister. When Julia died, her funeral oration was delivered by her youngest grandson, the future Augustus.

Julius Caesar
c.100-44 BCE

(1) Cornelia

(2) Pompeia

(3) Calpurnia

Julia
c.76-54 BCE

Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus
c.106-48 BCE

Pompey, along with Caesar and Crassus, was one of the Triumvirate, a three-way alliance through which dominated the last days of the Republic. Caesar and Pompey's friendship was sealed when Pompey married Julia, Caesar's only child, but that did not prevent the two statesmen sliding into open warfare soon after her death in childbirth.

Emperor Augustus
c.68 BCE - 14 CE

Caesar, left without a legitimate heir after the death of his only daughter in 54 BCE, adopted Octavius as his son and chosen successor. However, Octavius was already part of the family - he was Caesar's grand-nephew. Octavius made full use of his new status, eventually seizing sole power and ruling as the Emperor Augustus.

(1) Cludia Pulcha

(2) Scribonia

(3) Livia Drusilla
c.58 BCE - 29 CE

Tiberius Claudius Nero
c.42 BCE - 37 CE

Julia the Elder
39 BCE - 14 CE

Augustus' only legitimate child, Julia was pushed into a marriage with Tiberius, Augustus' own stepson. However, the marriage was not a happy one. Julia reportedly engaged in a number of affairs and was exiled to the island of Pandateria. She died suspiciously quickly after her husband's accession, perhaps she starved to death in revenge for her many past misdemeanours.

Nero Claudius Drusus
c.38 BCE - 9 CE

© Thinkstock, Wiki

The origins of a legend

Claiming descent from the gods themselves, Caesar seemed destined for glory, but in reality his journey to the top was long and arduous

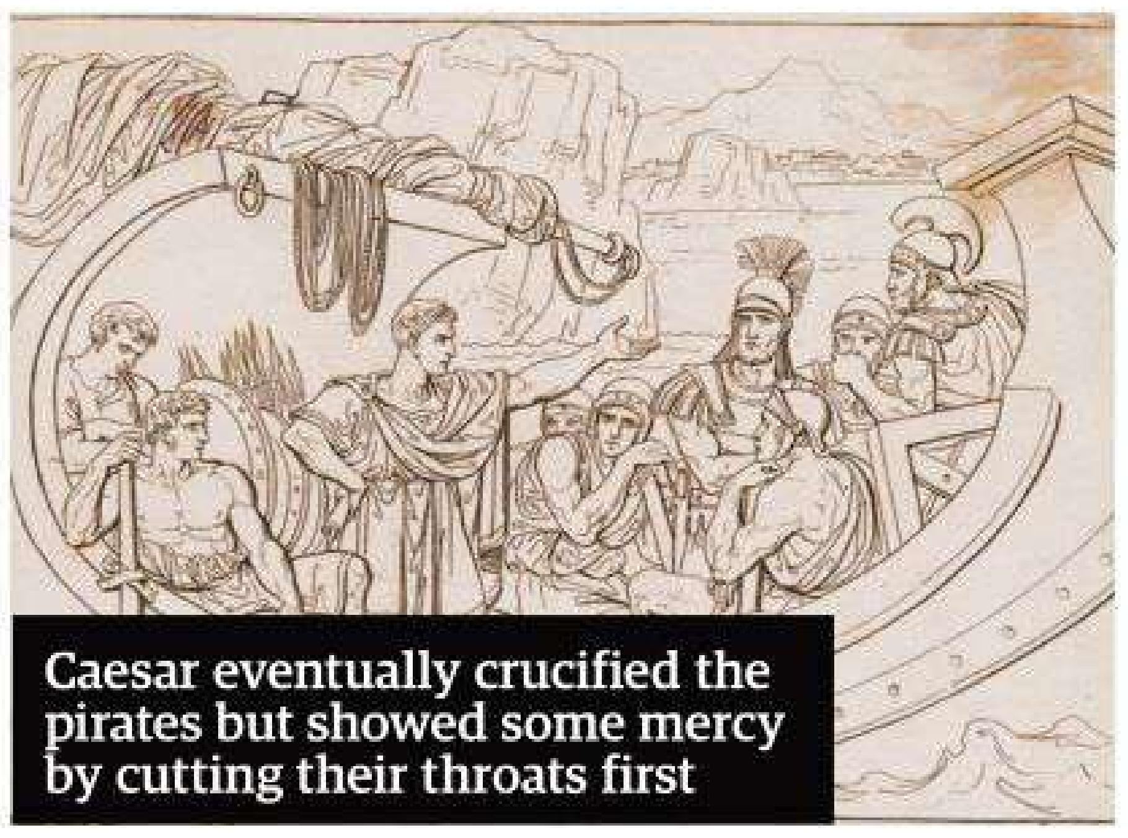
In his older days Caesar would stress the pedigree of his ancestors, claiming that he was descended from Venus herself, making him somewhat of a god. It is likely he was told this when he was younger. The paternal side of his family claimed descendence from Lulus, son of the Trojan prince Aeneas, a figure from legend who was supposedly the son of Venus. This paints the picture of an esteemed, ancient lineage, a family who rubbed shoulders with the elite of society. While this is partly true, the family's influence had severely waned by the time Caesar was born. With only an ancient claim to a god, the family clung to their pedigree in name, but in reality their political power was small.

The date of Caesar's birth has been disputed, but the most commonly held belief is that he was born on 12 or 13 July 100 BCE in Rome.

They had only produced three consuls, and despite the advantage of being born to an aristocratic family, the young Caesar did not have wealth or power to propel him to success. Instead, from an early age, the boy understood that he had to prove his worth by his own deeds. There was no fast-track ticket to political power for the young Caesar, but a slow climb that would take cunning, skill and determination to reach the summit.

Like much of his early life, the date of Caesar's birth has been disputed, but the most commonly held belief is that he was born on 12 or 13 July 100 BCE in Rome. His family were aristocratic, and his mother especially. Aurelia Cotta hailed from a family who had birthed several consuls. His father Gaius Julius Caesar was a praetor, the second highest of elected magistrates, and he also governed the Roman province of Asia. Caesar also had two older sisters, Julia Major and Julia Minor. We can presume due to his occupation that Caesar's father was not particularly present in the young man's life, and in 85 BCE he died suddenly while putting on his shoes. The death was a mystery, with no apparent cause, and the bulk of his estate was left to his son. Caesar, aged just 16, suddenly found himself the head of the household.

Luckily, Caesar's father had already arranged an education for his son. He had hired the tutor Marius Antonius Gnipho, who would be responsible for teaching the young Caesar the work of ancient poets like Homer and Virgil, as well as how to speak correctly. Gnipho himself was a remarkable man who was abandoned as a child and grew up as a slave but was later freed. He was known for his impressive memory, a trait that Caesar was likely influenced by and was known for himself in later life. He was also generous, allowing pupils to pay what they could for his services. Many other great orators, such as Cicero, regarded as one of Rome's most distinguished, were said to be pupils. Considering how little Caesar saw his own father, it is likely that the quick-witted and determined Gnipho served as a major male influence in the young man's life.



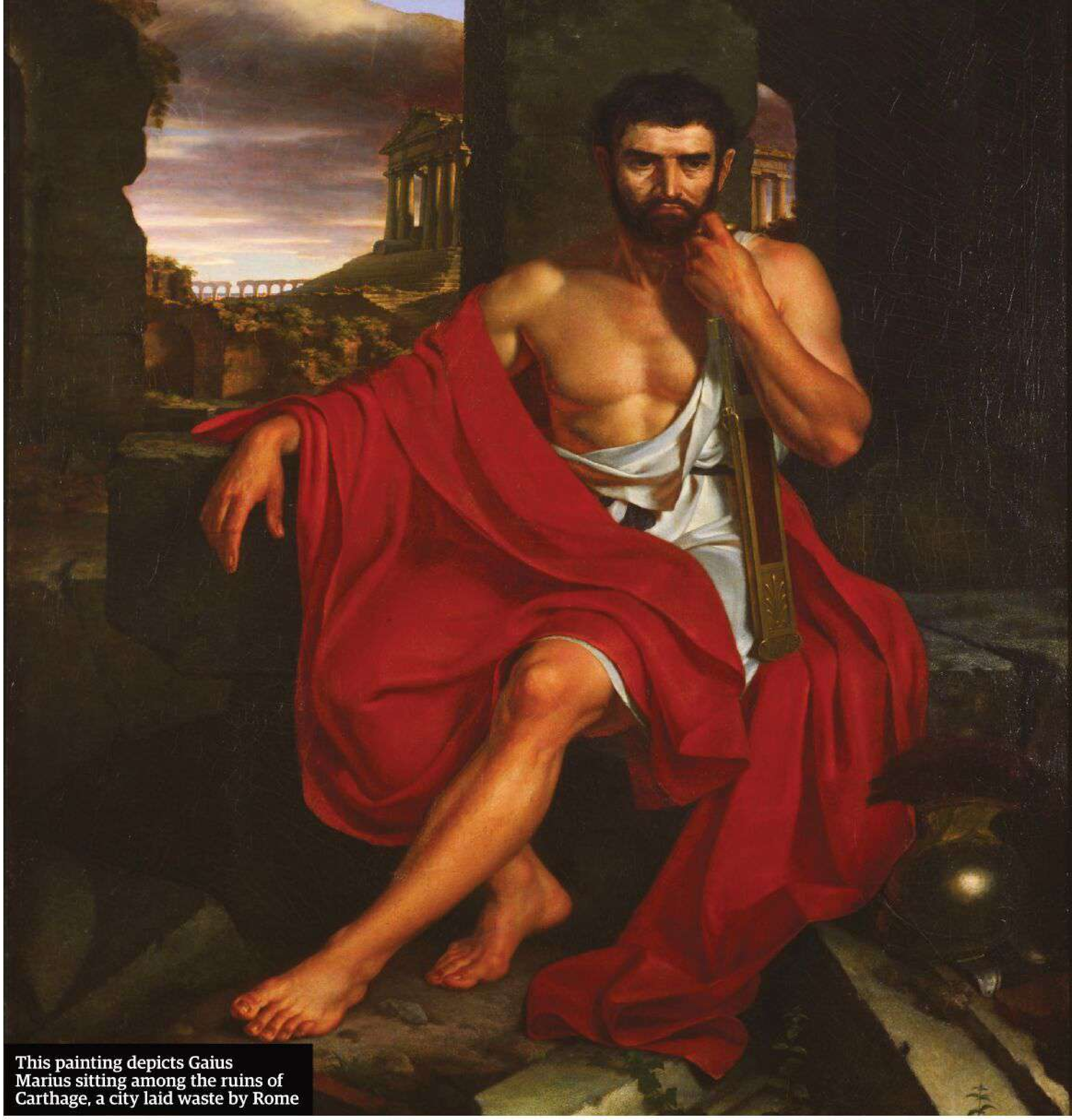
Caesar eventually crucified the pirates but showed some mercy by cutting their throats first

Capture by pirates

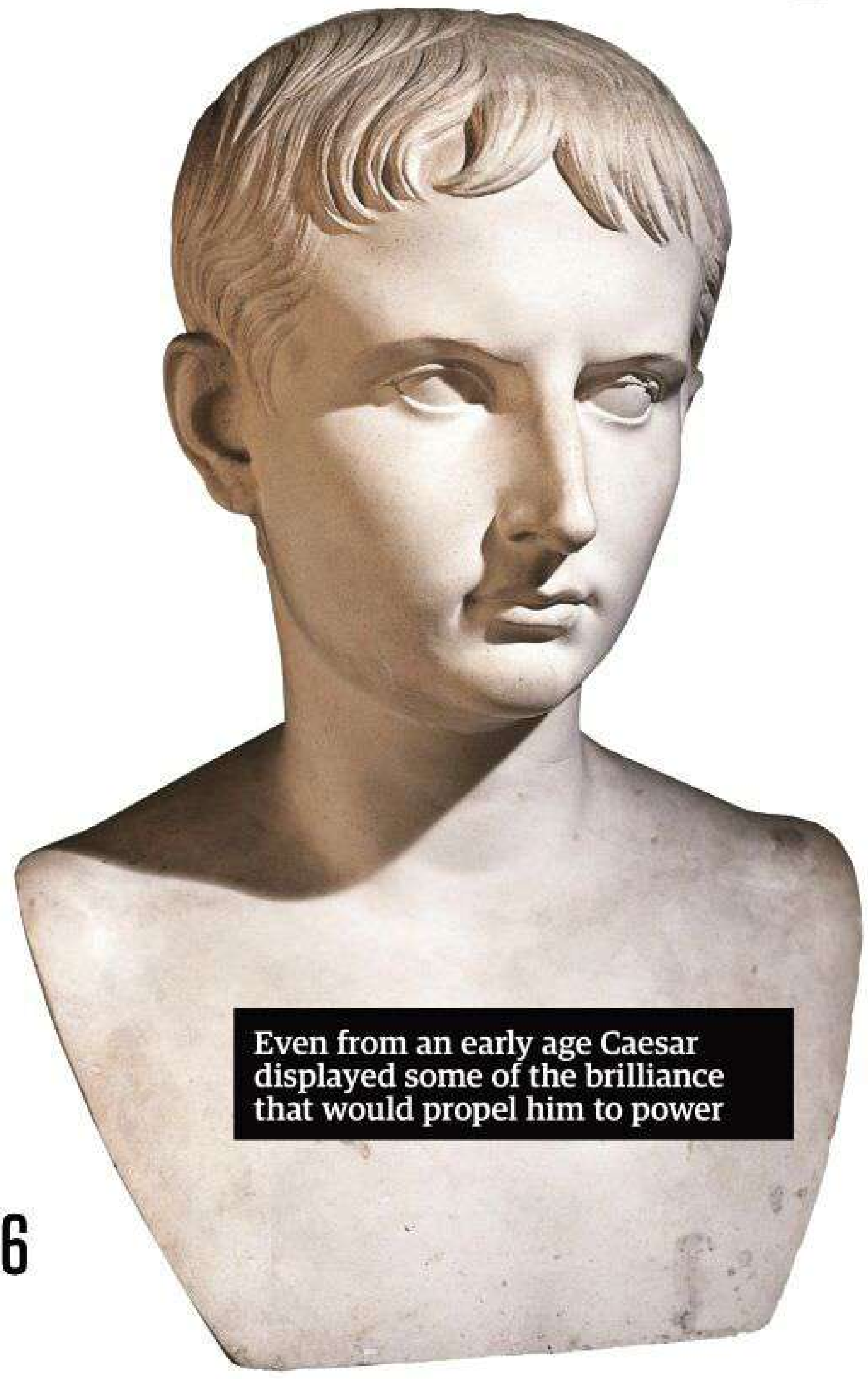
The Mediterranean Sea of Caesar's time was infested by Cilician pirates, who often traded slaves with the Romans. While travelling, Caesar found himself kidnapped by these pirates and held prisoner. It is an event that offers a great insight into Caesar's personality and self-belief in his earlier years.

Initially the pirates asked for a ransom of 20 talents, at which Caesar laughed, claiming they had undervalued him and should raise it to 50. While his followers dashed off to find the money, Caesar remained the pirates' captive for 38 days. But this was no captivity in chains. Not only did Caesar join in with their games, but he also demanded they be quiet when he was trying to sleep. He wrote speeches that he recited to them, and if they did not praise them he called them savages and threatened to have them hung.

The pirates warmed quickly to the boastful young man, believing him to have a playful, arrogant, boyish manner. They were mistaken, however, as after the ransom was paid Caesar gathered his own fleet, captured the pirates and imprisoned them. When the governor of Asia refused to have them executed, Caesar had it done himself on his own authority, just as he had promised.



This painting depicts Gaius Marius sitting among the ruins of Carthage, a city laid waste by Rome



Even from an early age Caesar displayed some of the brilliance that would propel him to power

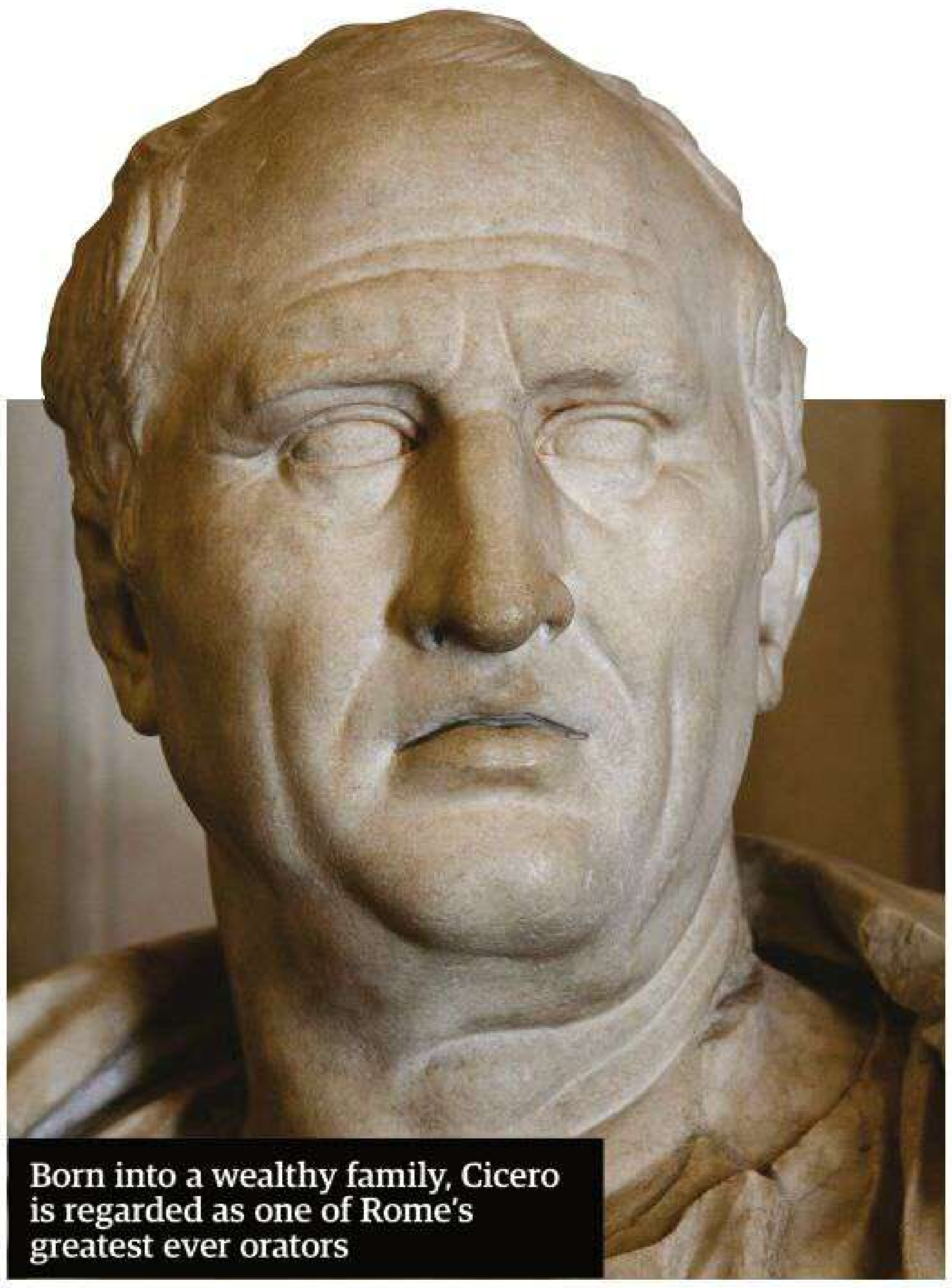
These were all attributes that Caesar would need to develop within himself to survive his childhood. Caesar was born into a Rome that was awash with political turmoil and savage bloodshed. Disorder and instability threatened to tear the state in two. The social war was being fought between the optimates, a conservative political group who placed the interests of the nobility highest, and the populares, who argued that there should be reform that benefitted the masses. Caesar's successful uncle, Gaius Marius, was the latter, and his protégé Lucius Cornelius Sulla the former. It was to no one's surprise that Caesar allied with his uncle.

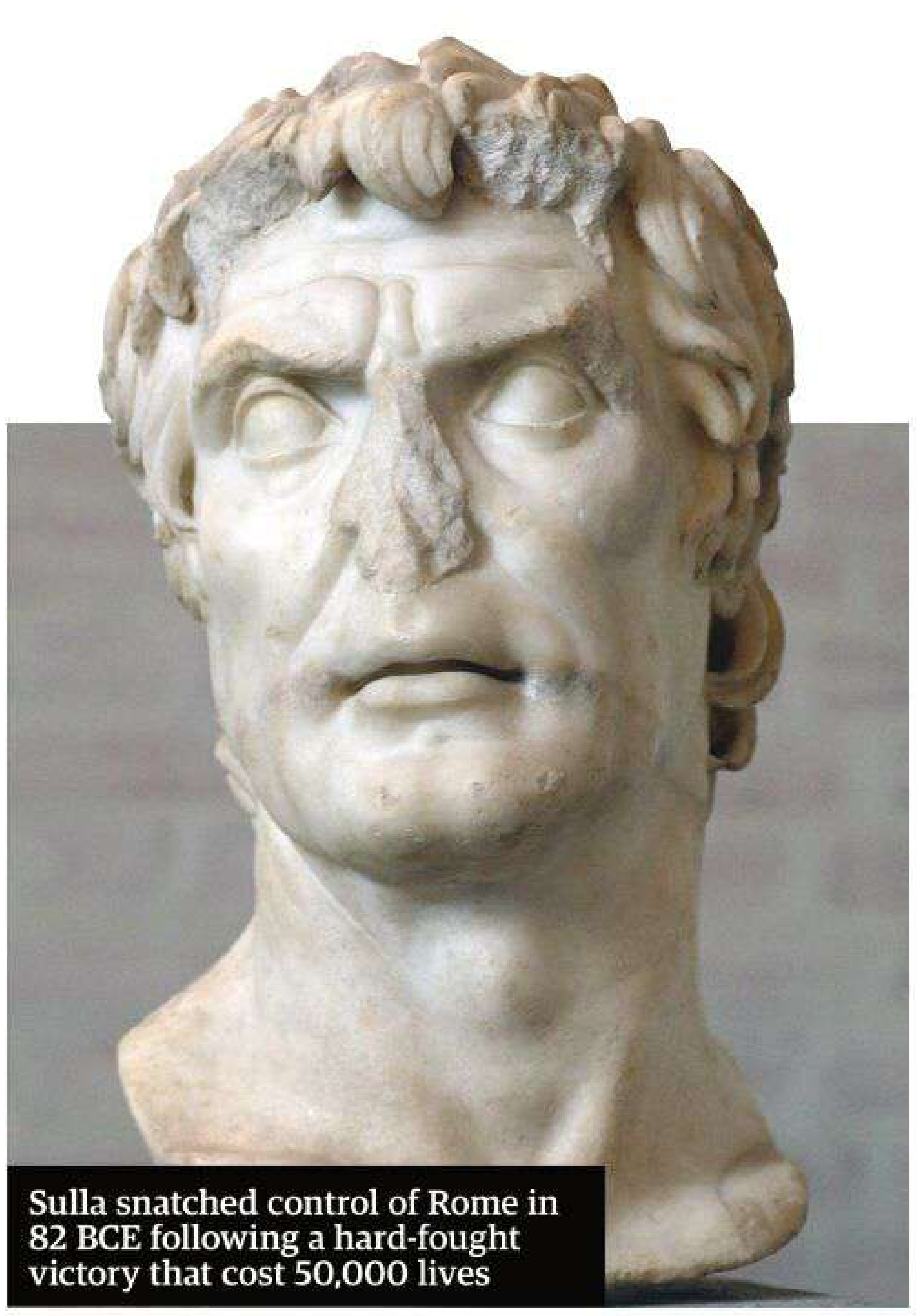
Eventually, Marius and his ally Cinna managed to seize the city and Sulla was declared a public enemy. Anyone who supported Sulla was dealt with violently by Marius' troops. Marius' reign, however, would not last long, as he died in 86 BCE, though his followers, such as Cinna, remained in power. All this bloodshed did provide Caesar with something – a position as the new Flamen Dialis, a high priest of Jupiter. The previous high priest had been killed in Marius' slaughter. Although the position did come with elevated power, there were certain rules Caesar had to follow. For example, the holder was expected to marry a member of the upper class. Caesar had been engaged to a plebian girl, who although she was wealthy did not quite tick the harsh boxes expected by society. To claim the position Caesar ended the engagement and instead married Cinna's daughter, Cornelia. Everything appeared to be in place for him to continue his ascent. He had a good job and now he had familial links to one of the most powerful men in Rome. However, as was often the case in Caesar's life, the path to glory was a perilous one.

> All this bloodshed did provide Caesar with something – a position as the new high priest of Jupiter. The previous high priest had been killed.

By 82 BCE Sulla was back with a vengeance. His efforts were now focused entirely on reclaiming Rome, and at the Battle of Colline Gate he did just that. After claiming victory, he cut off his rival commander's head and displayed it in the city. Those who opposed him were imprisoned, exiled or killed. Wanting to make sure his rule would go unchallenged, Sulla revived the post of dictator, a position that traditionally enjoyed a six-month term. Sulla removed the time limit.

Although already dead, Marius was especially loathed and made an example of. His body was exhumed and dumped in the Tiber River, and all statues of him were destroyed. Cinna, Caesar's most powerful ally, was also dead, killed by his own soldiers. Caesar was immediately targeted by


Born into a wealthy family, Cicero is regarded as one of Rome's greatest ever orators


Sulla snatched control of Rome in 82 BCE following a hard-fought victory that cost 50,000 lives

the ruthless Sulla. Not only was he stripped of his inheritance, the dowry of his wife and his role in the priesthood, but he was also ordered to divorce Cornelia. Caesar, although young and likely terrified of the dramatic change in his circumstances, refused to do so, a brazen move against the most powerful man in Rome. Instead, he went into hiding. The threat hanging over the young man's head was only lifted thanks to his mother's intervention and supporters of Sulla on his maternal side. Sulla is said to have agreed very reluctantly, declaring that in the young Caesar he could see many Mariuses.

Caesar knew the best course of action was to throw himself into military life. The loss of his priesthood had been brutal, but it did mean he was now free to pursue a military career. He served first in the province of Asia and then in Cilicia. Caesar took to a military regime well, winning the Civic Crown, the second highest military honour, for his part during a siege. As well as his military prowess, his persuasive skills were also perfected during this military stint as he travelled to Bithynia to obtain the assistance of the king's fleet.

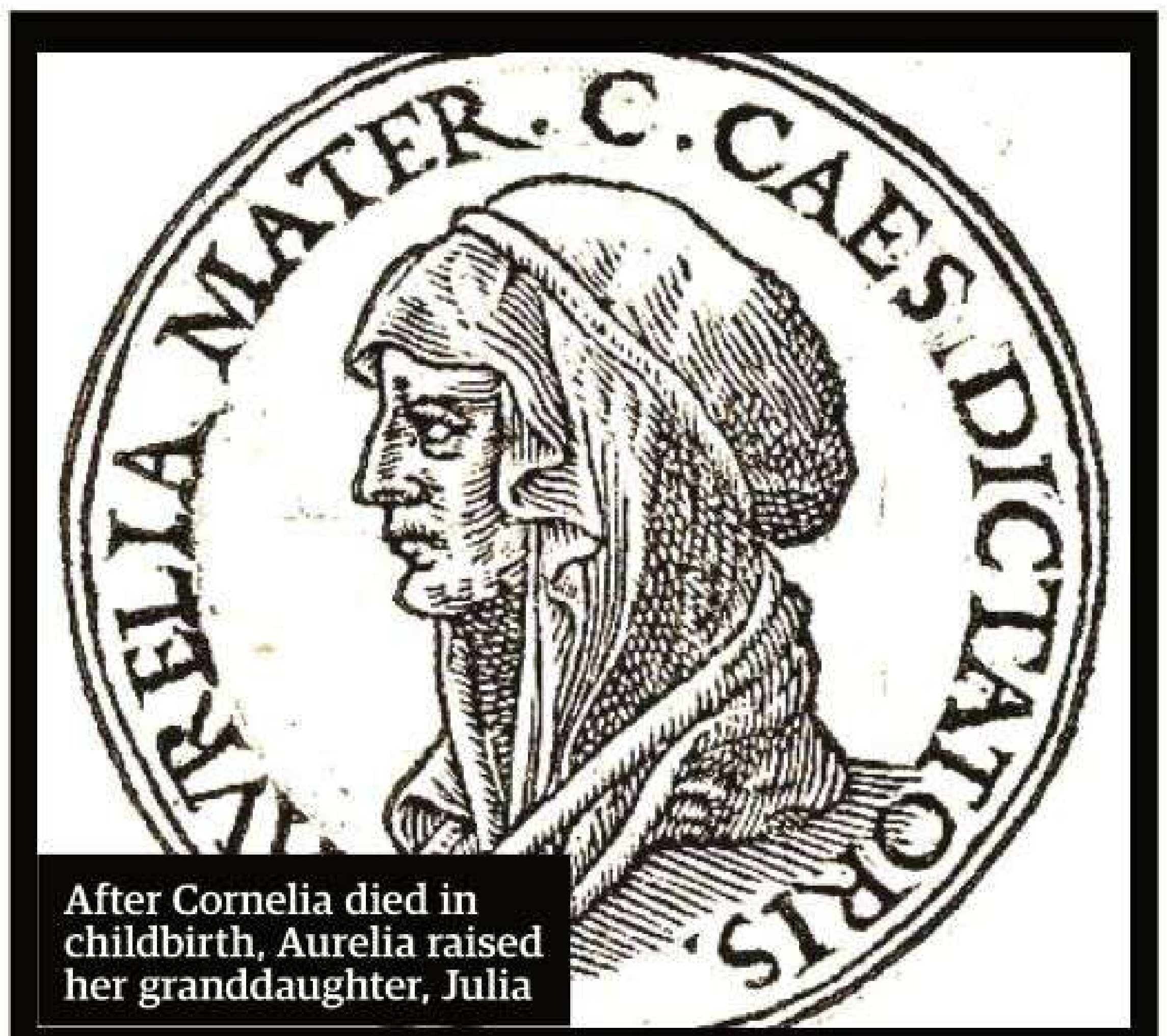
By 79 BCE Sulla had abandoned his dictatorship and the consuls had returned to government. A year later Sulla was dead, an event that produced the perfect political situation for an ambitious politician to exploit. Caesar hurried back to Rome. Struggling with what little money he had, he was forced to live in the lower-class area of the city and work from the bottom up. He spent some time serving in the legal services and quickly gained a reputation for his persuasive speeches, ruthlessly prosecuting former governors for corruption. Cicero himself praised the young Caesar, claiming that no other orator ranked above him. Encouraged by his success, Caesar was eager to reach the limit of his skills and travelled to Rhodes to study under Apollonius Molon, the man who had taught Cicero himself.

Caesar was said to look upon a statue of Alexander the Great and lament how little he himself had achieved in life despite being the same age.

Caesar learned much from Molon, and many attribute his later success to the tutor's guidance. Upon his return to Rome he was made a military tribune. By 69 BCE he became quaestor, the same year that his wife Cornelia died. Caesar was soon sent to Hispania to serve his role as quaestor. It was here that the fabled event took place where Caesar was said to look upon a statue of Alexander the Great and lament how little he himself had achieved in life despite being the same age. Feeling restless and inspired, he discharged himself from his duties and returned to Rome. Placing his ambitions above old grudges, he married Sulla's granddaughter, Pompeia.

Caesar's first political moves were risky ones. He spent a lot of money he did not have to reconstruct the ancient road of the Appian Way, as well as splashing out on public works and games. Risky though they were, these moves worked. Caesar won the voters' favour, allowing him to outshine his rivals and climb the political ladder. Proving he was far from a yes man and eager to make his mark, Caesar restored trophies of his uncle's victories and prosecuted men who benefitted from Sulla's purges.

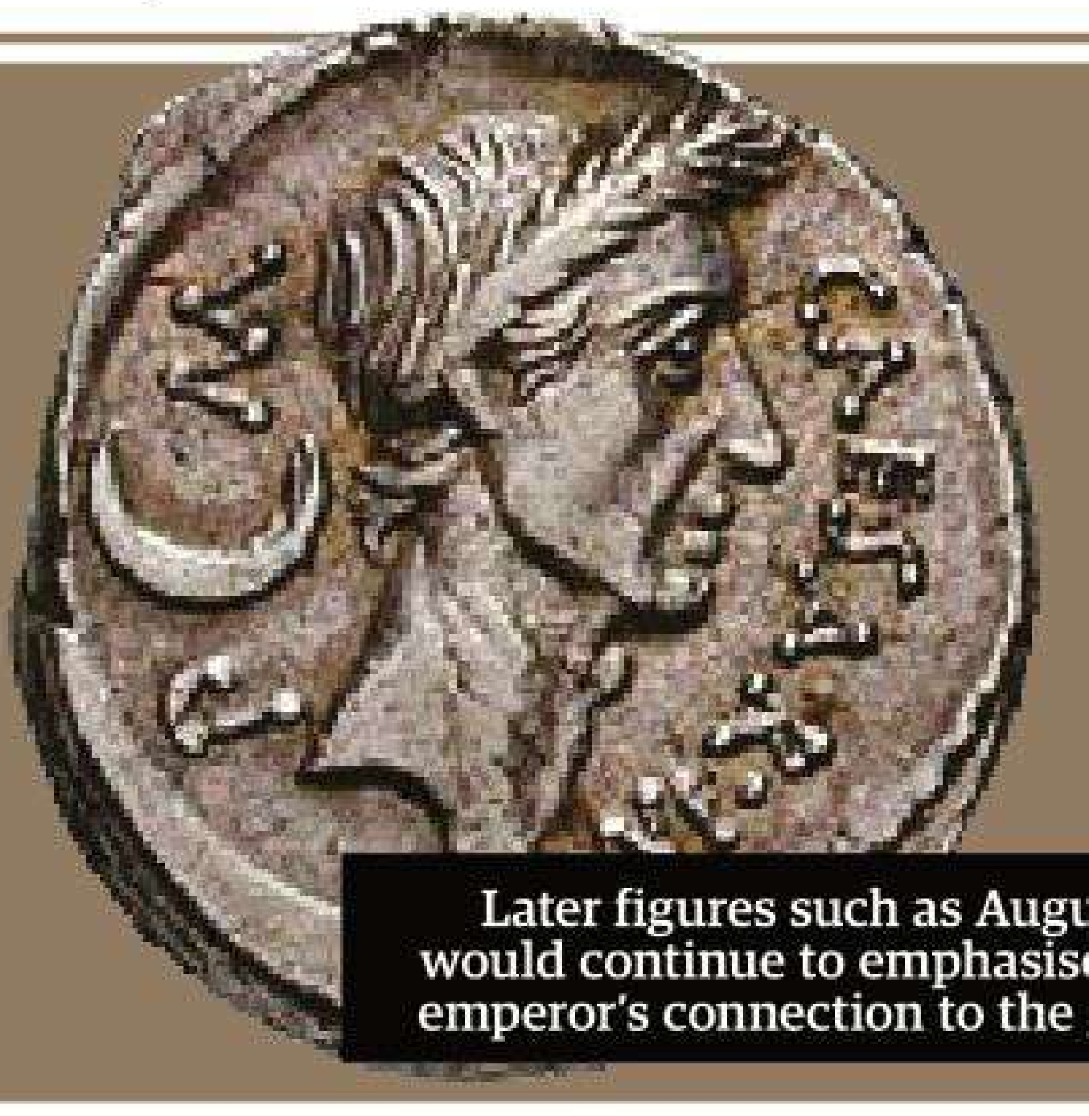
Caesar's first steps to power were not easy. He had to be patient, cunning and somewhat withdrawn in order to survive and eventually become one of the greatest leaders Rome would ever know.


AVRELIA MATER. C. CAES DICTATORIS
After Cornelia died in childbirth, Aurelia raised her granddaughter, Julia

Mother knows best

Due to his father's position and early death, Caesar did not have a strong father figure in his life. However, what he did have was a remarkable mother. To begin with, her family had achieved far more than the ancient paternal Julia line, and she had three consuls for brothers, as well as her father. Although the Julia clan may have claimed lineage from Venus herself, it was Caesar's maternal line and their strong political links that proved more helpful.

Aurelia herself was considered the perfect Roman matriarch: strict, beautiful, with a considerable intellect, she was highly respected. She was determined to raise an equally respected son and had a lot of control over Caesar's life, regulating not only his education but also his games and pastimes. She also ensured he had a good tutor, as well as appropriate marriages. It was Aurelia who intervened on behalf of her son and managed to obtain the favour of the Vestal Virgins and persuade the ruthless Sulla to end his threats. For her remaining years Aurelia would continue to play a central part in her son's life, keeping a careful watch on his adulterous wife.


Later figures such as Augustus would continue to emphasise the emperor's connection to the gods

Descended from the gods

The part of Caesar's ancestry that he referenced repeatedly throughout his rise to power and reign was actually the aspect that today would not be taken seriously at all – his relation to the goddess Venus. However, in Caesar's Rome this claim was seriously impressive. As the goddess of love, Venus was one of the most important deities. She was also goddess of victory and fertility, and Caesar was eager to emphasise his supposed lineage to her.

At the funeral of his aunt in 69 BCE Caesar publicly proclaimed his link to Venus, and when he faced Pompey in the civil war both men fought for Venus' support. It was said that Pompey was afraid of Caesar's relationship with the goddess, demonstrating just how powerful this claim was. Caesar vowed that if he beat Pompey at the battle of Pharsalus in 48 BCE he would build a temple to the goddess, and his eventual success only fuelled the legend forming around the man. He made good on his promise and built a temple to the goddess in the Julian Forum. Caesar's link to his most powerful 'ancestor' was stressed throughout his reign, with coins created featuring the leader's image on the front and Venus on the reverse.

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Caesar's rise to power

How one man's ambition and genius transformed Rome from a republic to a dictatorship

From Caesar's birth in 100 BCE to the time he crossed the Rubicon River in a brazen act of rebellion in 49 BCE, the Roman Senate floor was a battleground, where power was taken by cunning, conspiracy and force. The powder keg had exploded into conflict in 88 BCE with the first in a series of civil wars and rebellions, with the conservative elite locked in combat with the growing ranks of populists; Rome was full of orators, soldiers and politicians fighting for control. Gaius Julius Caesar was all three.

Caesar knew what he was capable of and what he wanted and, when Caesar saw an opportunity, he took it. His cunning, ruthlessness and the sheer scope of his ambition would change the landscape of western Europe and beyond. After decades of outrage and protest, adoration and adulation, only his murder could finally put a stop to Caesar's vision but, even as his blood cooled on the Senate floor, there was no doubt the change he brought about was irrevocable.

From a young age, Caesar showed the qualities that would propel him through the corrupt world of Roman politics. In 82 BCE, when Caesar was 18 years old, his family was in a precarious position. They were linked to the regime of the popular consul Gaius Marius by marriage, so when Marius's bitter enemy, Sulla, took power by force they had to capitulate to this new regime to survive.

Sulla ordered Caesar to abandon his position as high priest of Jupiter and to break off his marriage to Cornelia, daughter of Marius's old ally Cinna. With a stubbornness that bordered on suicidal, Caesar refused to kneel and went into hiding till his mother could convince Sulla to give him a reprieve.

Instead of idly waiting for Sulla's forgiveness, Caesar took the first step on what would prove to be a long and illustrious career. He joined the military and travelled to Asia in service of the empire. He quickly proved himself in battle, earning the Civic Crown (one of the highest military decorations available to a Roman soldier) for saving the life of one of his men.

This dedication to his fellow soldiers would be a cornerstone of Caesar's life in the army, as he understood how vital the respect and loyalty of his men would be. His spotless reputation was threatened when he was sent to obtain a fleet from the Bithynian monarch Nicomedes though. Caesar spent so long at Nicomedes' court that word spread the young soldier was engaged in an affair with the king. Whether or not there was any truth to the rumour, Caesar certainly denied it fiercely at every opportunity. While the rumour never quite went away, it didn't slow him down.

When Sulla died in 78 BCE, the stage was set for Caesar's return to Rome. He had proven himself as a soldier and now it was time to demonstrate

> Though their love affair is legendary, Caesar could not have married Cleopatra as she was not a Roman citizen.

Rome before Caesar

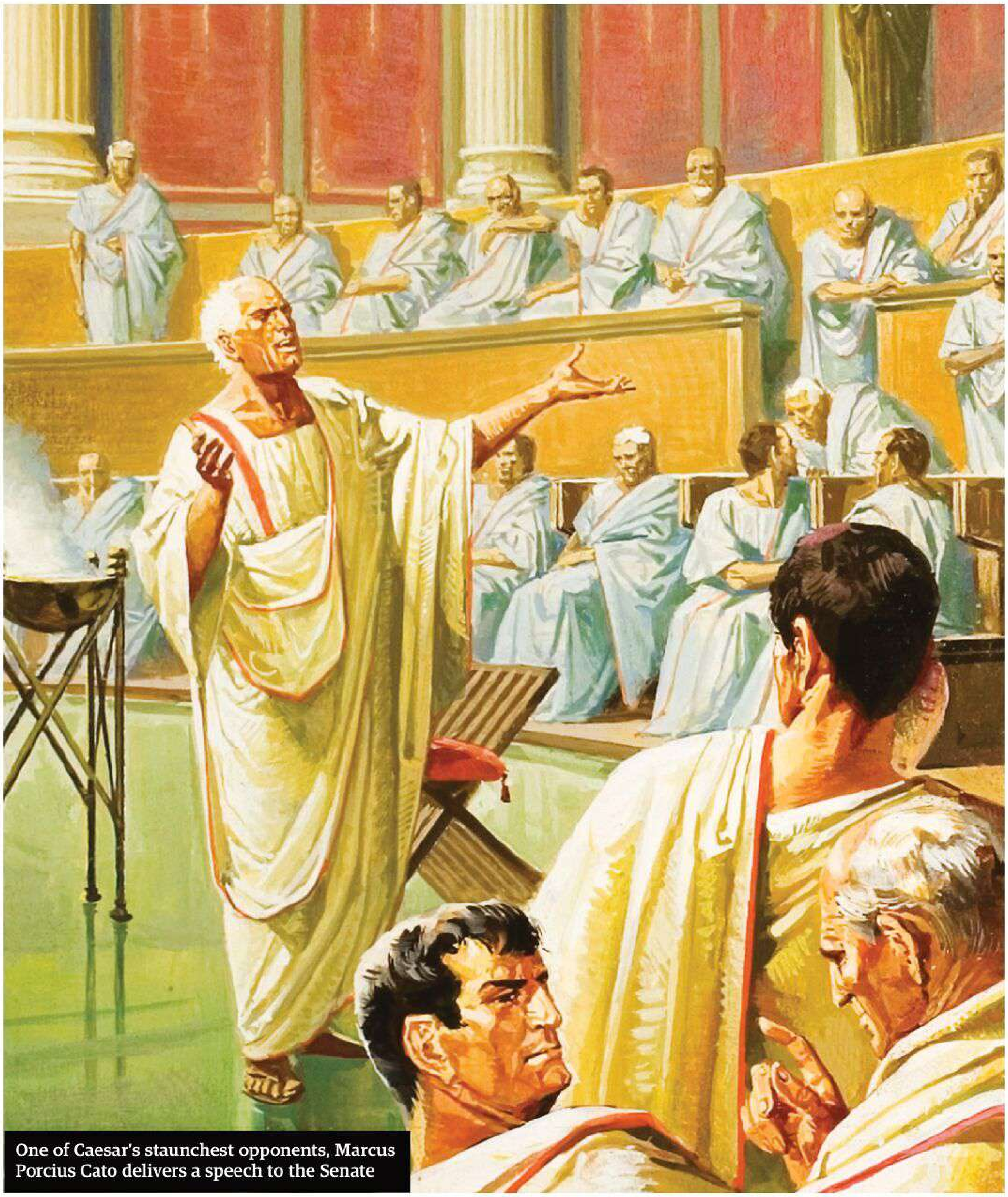
Before Caesar stepped onto the Senate floor, the Roman political system was divided in two: the optimates and the populists. Every politician stated their belief in freedom, but the problem was that the two groups had different ideas about what exactly freedom meant.

The Senate had become something close to a private club run by the optimates, where privilege, status and who you knew meant power. However, that libertarian ideal meant something very different to the populists, who made their voices heard in the People's Assembly. Both groups believed that they were acting in the best interests of the Republic, and both used the word "liberty" in their manifestos, but they agreed on practically nothing, leading to political chaos.

The populists and conservatives would face each other in the Plebeian Assembly where they would fight for the popular vote. It would seem that the popular vote would surely have gone to the populists, but the conservatives had several points in their favour. The voters who could afford to travel from outside of Rome would often side with the elite, while others could easily be bribed. The outrage over this corruption, along with the government's military failures in Gaul and North Africa, led to a precarious state of affairs for anyone occupying the position of consul.

General Gaius Marius was elected to improve Rome's military operations overseas and was immensely popular. When Sulla, an optimate general, was elected for the same reason, the populists panicked and tried to recall him. An enraged Sulla responded by executing the tribune who had proposed the order and establishing himself as Rome's dictator, instigating Rome's first civil war. Marius and Sulla battled for power until the former died of natural causes, leaving Sulla without any opposition. He spent the remainder of his time in office working to diminish the influence of the populists and increase the power of the conservatives.

When Sulla himself died in 78 BCE, the people were desperate for a voice in the Senate, and Julius Caesar was ready to speak for them.



One of Caesar's staunchest opponents, Marcus Porcius Cato delivers a speech to the Senate

one of his other skills. He entered into the legal profession and used his other great talent: his voice. Caesar was a charismatic and persuasive public speaker and he used this skill to full effect. The Roman political system was in a constant state of imbalance between the wealthy elite that occupied the Senate and the populists who raged against such flagrant inequality. Caesar's gift for public speaking helped him to gain the support of the populace as he targeted corruption in the aristocracy. Caesar needed the people to love him and his every gesture was made with one eye on their reaction.

It wasn't just his grandstanding in the courthouse that was making him popular. The public loved a good story and Caesar had a knack for providing them. In 75 BCE he was captured by pirates while sailing to Greece, who planned on holding him to ransom to the tune of 20 talents of gold. Caesar had no intention of being ransomed for so paltry a sum and told them so. Instead, he convinced his captors to raise their price to 50.

The story that returned to Rome with Caesar was that the group kept up a lively, jovial atmosphere, in which the prisoner promised that, when he was released, he would hunt them down and kill them as punishment for their crimes. The pirates may not have taken him at his word and that would prove a fatal mistake. As soon as he was freed, Caesar led a group that captured, imprisoned and crucified them. Ruthless treatment indeed, but ever with an eye on the crowd Caesar showed a measure of mercy and ordered that their throats be slit first to spare them the agony of the execution. After all, they had treated him well.

An opportunity to face greater odds and test himself as a leader on the battlefield arose when fighting broke out in Asia Minor. Caesar raised a military force and defended Rome's territory long enough for his commanders to launch a counterattack. He returned home a hero and was promptly elected military tribune, followed by an appointment as quaestor (a kind of magistrate) for southern Spain and Portugal soon after.

This magisterial position put him in charge of finances in the region and gave him bureaucratic and administrative experience that would serve him well. When he returned to Rome for his Aunt Julia's funeral, Julius Caesar gave a eulogy that left nobody in any doubt about his ambition or his self-belief. In this speech, he reiterated that his late aunt's illustrious lineage could be traced back to the gods themselves. It would not have been lost on anyone present that Caesar was taking this opportunity to remind everyone that he was also from holy stock. A man descended from the gods would not be content with remaining a magistrate.

Now back in Rome, Caesar had taken his first steps on the political ladder and he quickly showed he wasn't going to stop climbing. Although he preached against corruption, Caesar was not above bribing anyone who might help him get what he wanted. As he leapfrogged from aedile in 65 BCE to high priest in 63 to praetor in 62, he was falling

> "As he leapfrogged from aedile in 65 BCE to high priest in 63 to praetor in 62, he was falling deeper into debt"

deeper into debt and making some formidable enemies - particularly the apparently incorruptible senator Marcus Porcius Cato (or Cato the Younger).

A nearly fatal stumble occurred when Caesar was forced to slip out of two scandals in quick succession. Many believed that he had been involved in Catiline's attempt to assassinate the then-consul Cicero, while he was forced to divorce his wife when it became clear that she'd been in part responsible for the Bona Dea scandal. While the former plot involved the overthrow of the government, the latter, in which it was clear that a man had attended an exclusively female religious ceremony and thus desecrated it, was far more embarrassing. Both were costly, and Caesar ended up bankrupting himself to stay above them. If he had any intention of going further - which he certainly did - Caesar not only needed more money, he needed to get some muscle on side.

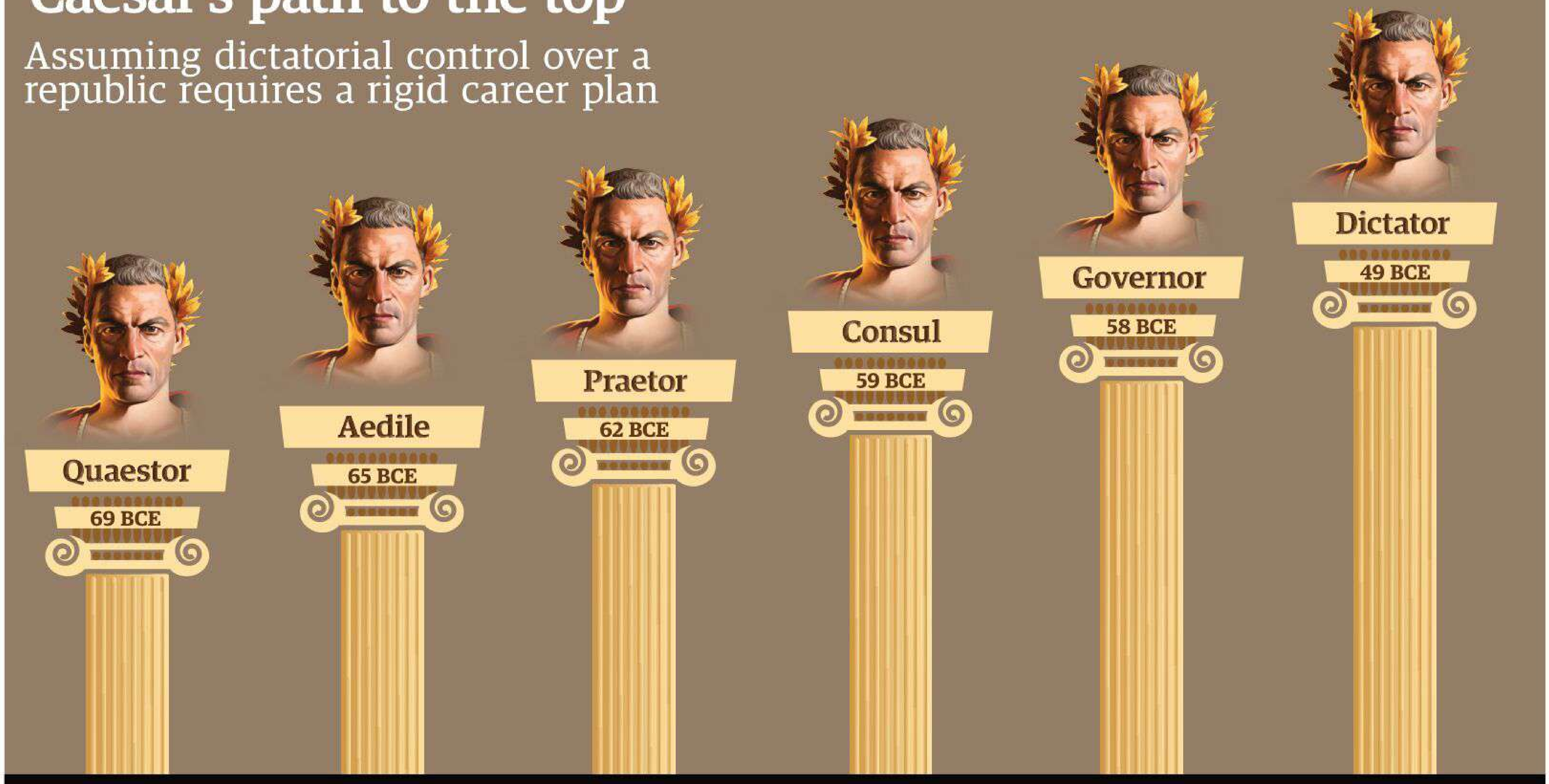
Financial backing came from the extremely wealthy Marcus Crassus. Crassus had made his name as a young general fighting with Sulla, but his real talent lay with making money from properties and buying and selling slaves. Caesar's debts were so serious that he couldn't even leave Rome to start his new governorship in Spain before he made some repayments. Fortunately for Caesar, Crassus saw how popular Caesar was with the public and agreed to satisfy some of his creditors, allowing Caesar to go on to yet more military triumphs in his Spanish Wars.

He crushed the rebelling tribes and looted their cities, before helping the region extricate itself from debt. Once again, Caesar returned home a hero and with his eye on the next step up: the consulship. He was so determined to obtain the position that he passed up the opportunity for a military parade through the city in order to put his application forward before the deadline. Adulation could wait; his rise to power could not.

He may have had money and he certainly had popularity, but Caesar knew that he needed brute force to combat his enemies in the Senate and keep them quiet. In a moment of brilliant inspiration, he turned to a respected general and Crassus's bitterest rival, Gnaeus Pompeius - otherwise known as Pompey. In 62 BCE Pompey had returned from campaigns in Syria and Judaea that were so successful it made the Roman senators nervous. In

Caesar's path to the top

Assuming dictatorial control over a republic requires a rigid career plan



In 69 BCE Caesar was elected quaestor for Baetica (Andalucía). The position was similar to that of a magistrate combined with an accountant; Caesar oversaw the finances of the region and conducted investigations where necessary. This role may have inspired his vision of a smoother-running empire and his later innovations to Roman infrastructure.

An aedile organised games and looked after Rome's public buildings and markets. Caesar used this position to win public favour by staging immense gladiatorial games, with over 640 gladiators. The Senate was wary of the furore of the event and set a limit on how many gladiators one man could keep, but the message was clear: Caesar knew what the common people wanted.

The praetor position combined the duties of an aedile and a quaestor. They were senior magistrates appointed to oversee civil matters, while others had specific courts to head up. In the absence of a consul, the praetor took power. Just one step before consulship, at this point Caesar's opponents were beginning to grow anxious as he showed no signs of slowing down.

The consulship was a presidential post shared by two men that had been established after the Romans abolished the monarchy. It came with a lot of power too as the consul had control of the Republic's finances, the military and the justice system. Although a consul was supposed to listen to the Senate's advice, they could not be tried until their term of office was over.

A governor, or proconsul, was a regional position that had many of the same duties as a consul. Lucrative and powerful, it was the traditional posting following a consulship, and a proconsul could not face prosecution until his term had finished. As governor of Gaul, Caesar added modern-day France and Belgium to the empire and ventured on expeditions to Britain.

'Dictator' was the title given to a magistrate who was temporarily entrusted with the full authority of the state to deal with a military emergency, and Caesar was granted this in 49 BCE. However, he managed to hold onto this title and then in 44 BCE, he became dictator for life. This removed the time limit on his dictatorship - not that it mattered in the end.

order to limit his power, they ignored his request to ratify the treaties he had secured and the promises he had made to his soldiers. The general was eager to lend his support to somebody who might get things done and restore his pride.

Caesar convinced Crassus and Pompey that the benefits of power were worth putting aside their differences and formed the First Triumvirate in 60 BCE. To seal their agreement, Pompey married Caesar's daughter Julia, while Caesar married Calpurnia – the daughter of a friend of Crassus. This political powerhouse terrified the Senate – particularly Cato – who set himself directly in opposition to the ambitious candidate.

What came next was a political campaign so dirty and underhanded that even Cato, renowned for his honesty, was forced to resort to bribery to keep Caesar out. It didn't work. With money, muscle and cunning, his campaign was unstoppable and Caesar was elected consul in 59 BCE.

While he took care of his friends (Pompey was appointed governor in Spain and Crassus a general), Caesar's time as consul cemented his reputation for ruthlessness. If his powers of persuasion weren't enough, Pompey's soldiers intimidated any opposition in the Senate. Caesar's co-consul (and Cato's son-in-law), Bibulus, could mutter about omens all he liked; he was intimidated and ignored to such an extent that the co-consul finally fled for the safety of his own home. It's rumoured that Pompey's soldiers even went as far as tipping a bucket of faeces over his head.

Contrary to popular belief, Caesar was not born through a caesarean, although this practise did exist in the Roman era.

And Caesar didn't limit his rough treatment to his colleague. He imprisoned Cato for disagreeing with him and used Pompey's soldiers to clear the Forum of opposition. His methods were so outrageous it was certain that he would be tried for his crimes once he gave up office. Caesar was well aware of this and secured the position of proconsul in Gaul for a five-year tenure, despite Cato's objections, allowing him to leave Rome before he could be prosecuted. It was time for Caesar to face conflict on a much larger scale.

Cato was afraid that Caesar was going to use his position in Gaul to instigate conflict, and his concerns proved to be justified. Caesar immediately set about provoking Swiss tribe the Helvetii into an attack, which was the equivalent of a starter's pistol for years of relentless and wide-ranging campaigning. His attacks were ruthless and daring, and his responses to those of his enemies were quick-witted and precise.

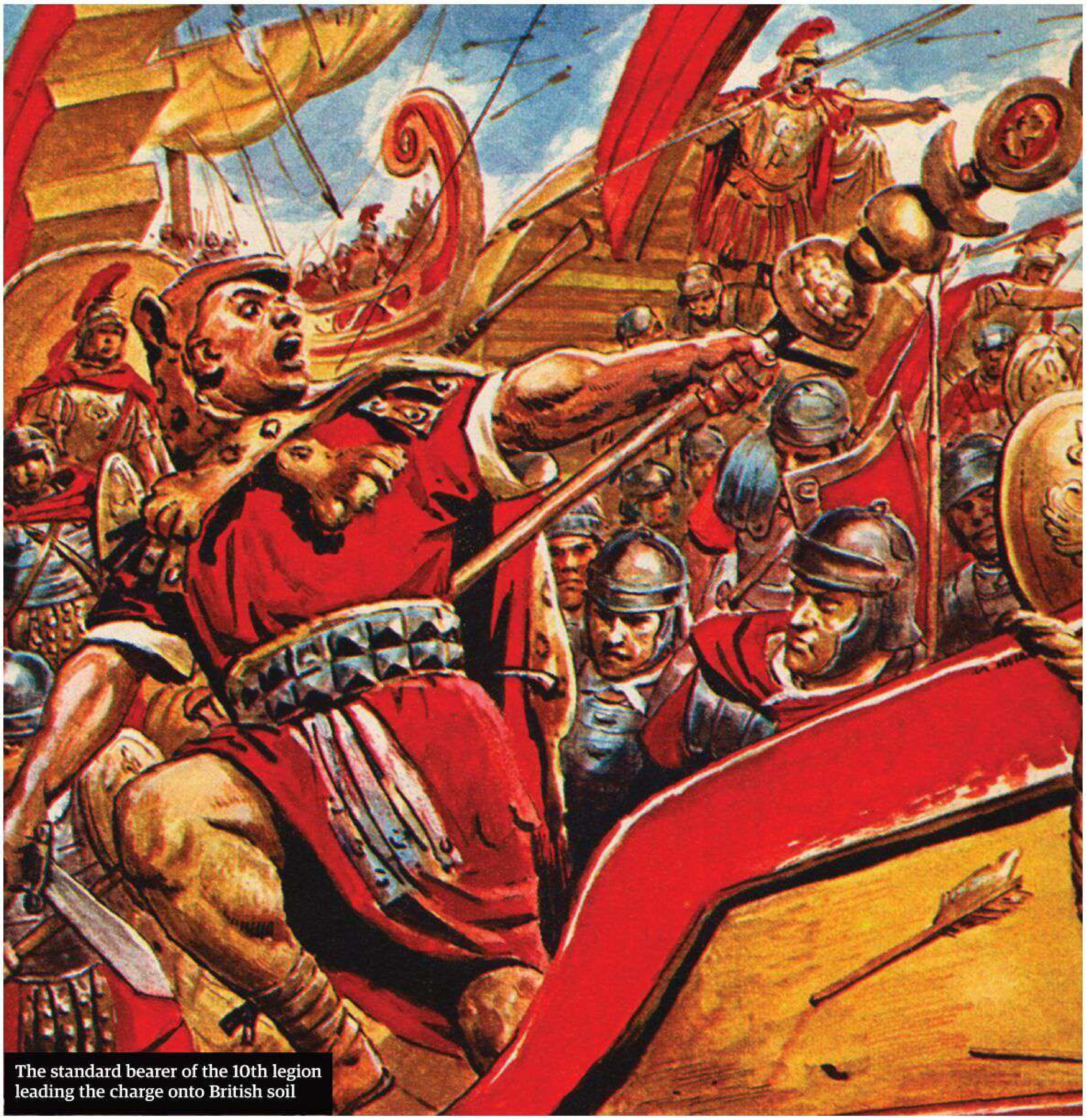
The Gallic and Germanic tribes were subdued between 57-55 BCE, at which point he sailed for Great Britain. There was no lasting success across the Channel but, as Cato had feared, tales of his ambitious exploits were getting back to Rome. Word reached the Senate that Gaul was pacified in 53 BCE. Cato could declare that Caesar was acting in his own interests and not those of the empire, but the people loved him for protecting Rome.

Time and again, Caesar knew how to endear himself to the masses and camped near to Italy in winter to allow stories of his victories – not to mention treasure – to trickle back.

Even as he waged war across northern Europe, Caesar was aware that his time as proconsul would have to end. He knew all too well that once he returned to Rome he would face a serious list of charges, both from his time as consul and as a general. His attacks in Germany were so savage and fierce that he was forced to spin them to avoid losing popularity. But the farther Caesar took his army, the greater fortune he amassed and the more soldiers he was able to recruit. Unlike the Roman centurions, these men from Gaul and Germany had no loyalty to the empire; they were loyal to their general, and Caesar rewarded them well for it.

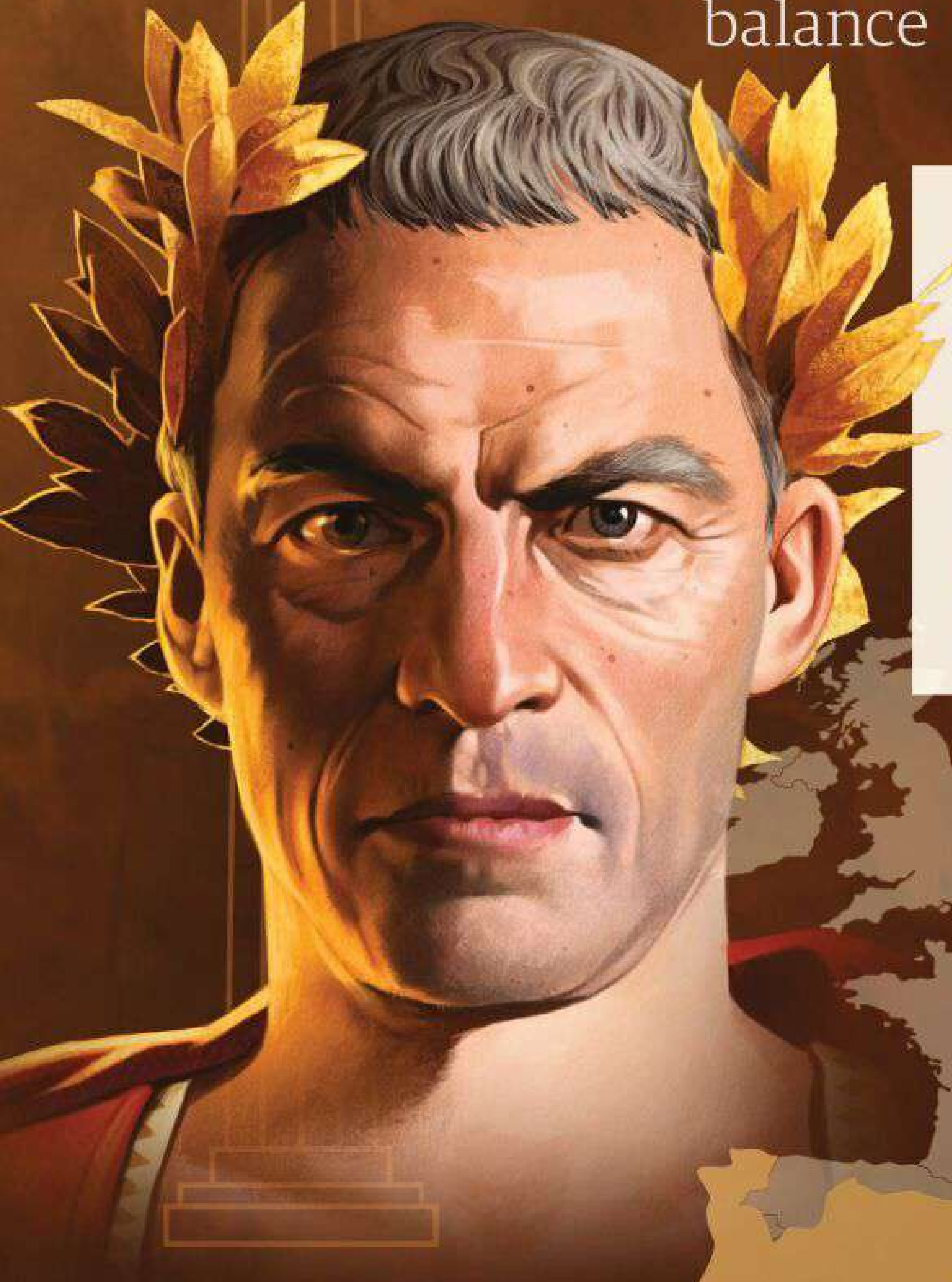
Back in Rome, the Senate was fully aware of Caesar's brutal strategies and growing military strength. Keen to ensure that the trial of Julius Caesar should proceed as smoothly as possible, they reached out to Caesar's old friend Pompey. Their relationship had always been built on the foundation of the latter's marriage to Caesar's daughter Julia, who had died in 54 BCE. Crassus, the third part of the triumvirate, had died while fighting the Parthians in 53, and Pompey was growing ever-more jealous of Caesar's success and popularity. With no ties left to the triumvirate, the Senate understood that Pompey would question his allegiance.

The test came when Pompey was elected to sole consul in 52 BCE to


The standard bearer of the 10th legion leading the charge onto British soil

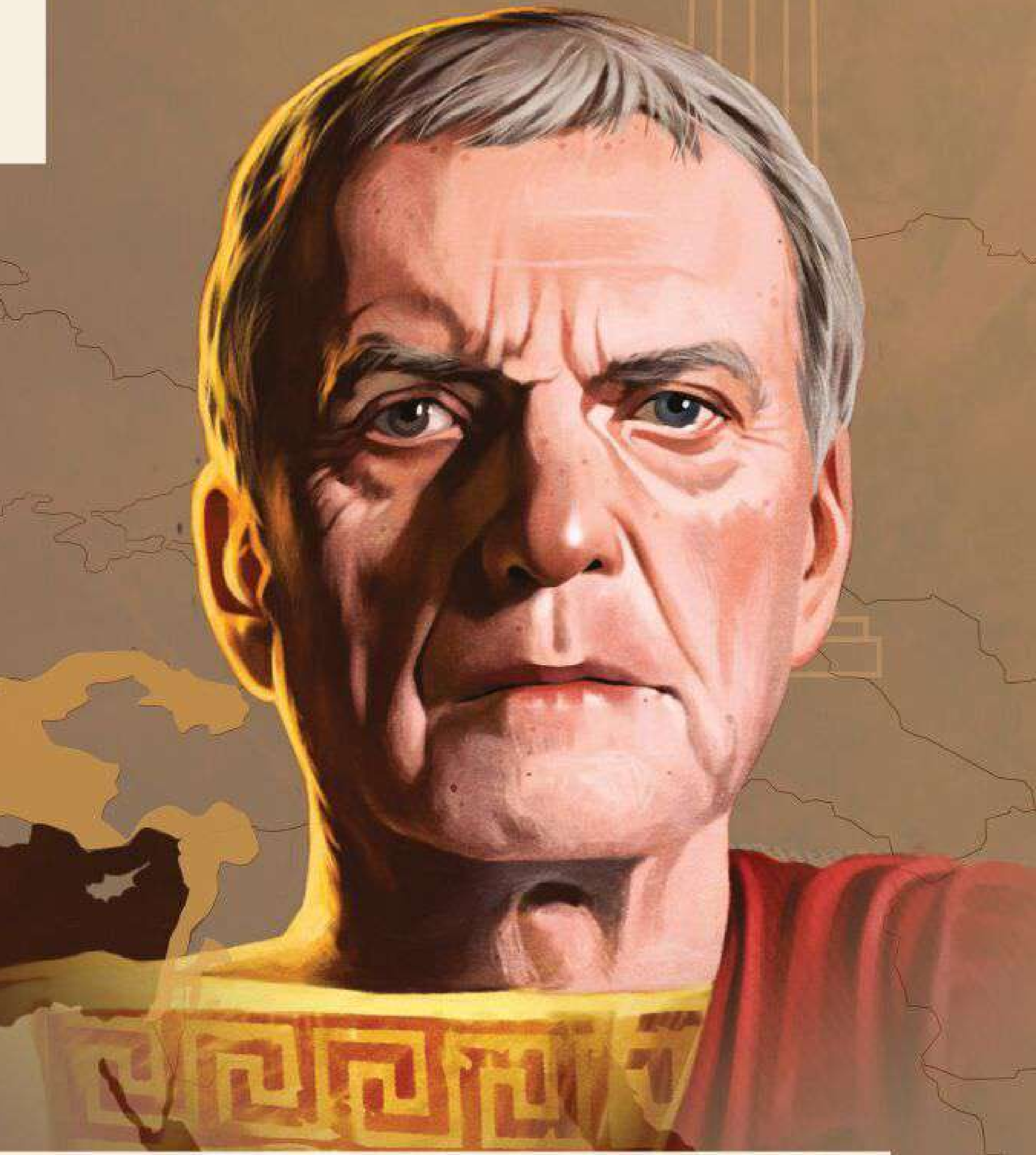
The First Triumvirate

Assembled by Caesar himself, this trio formed the perfect balance of money, military might and political cunning



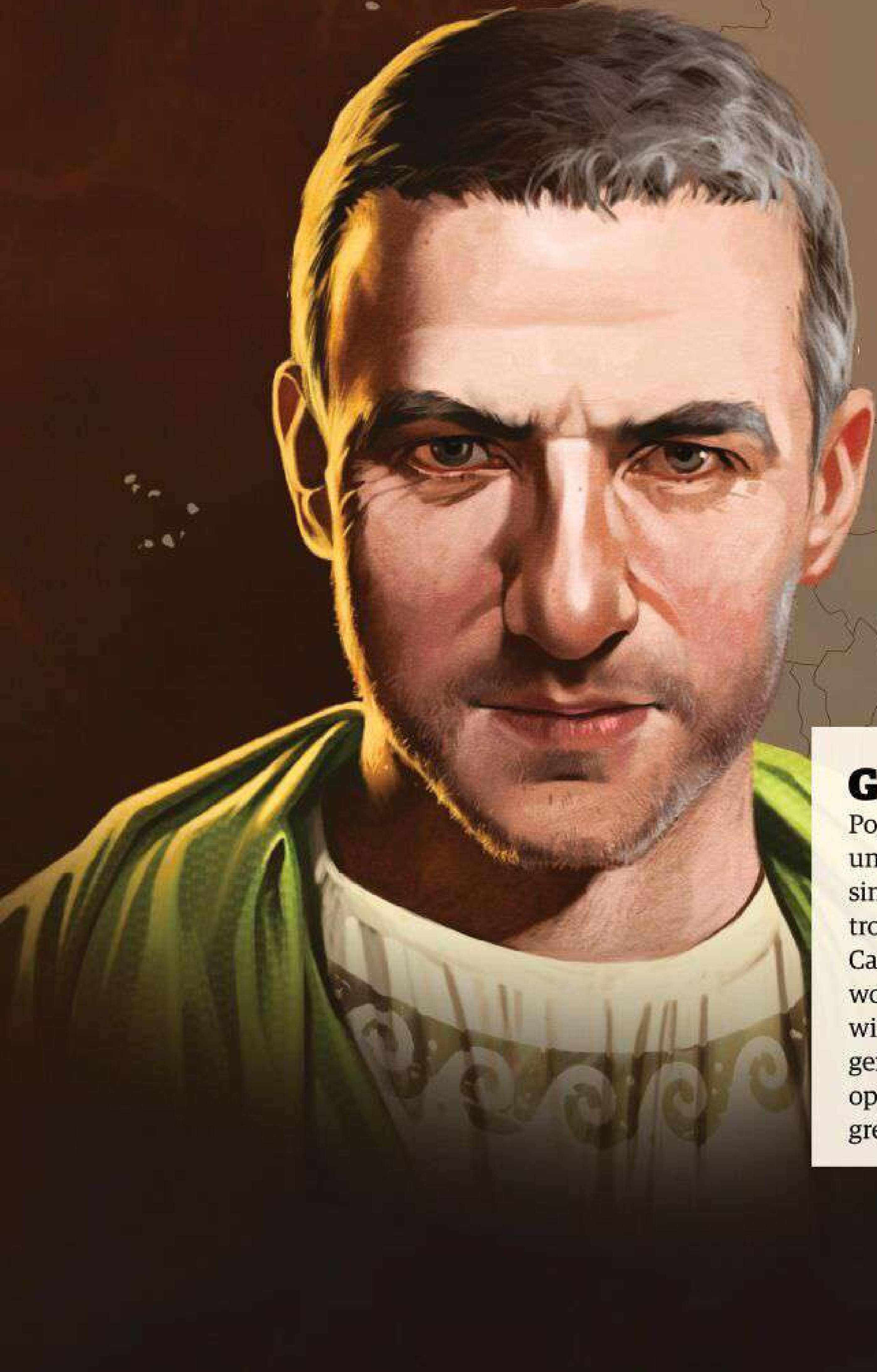
Julius Caesar

While Crassus gave the triumvirate gold and Pompey gave it military muscle, Caesar brought the political savvy and the ambition. The difficulty of reconciling two men who hated each other so bitterly should not be underestimated, but Caesar convinced them that the rewards he could give them through his consulship would far outweigh any petty rivalry. Once the First Triumvirate was formed, Caesar used brutal tactics to make sure he got what he wanted. The campaign he ran was so dirty that the famously honest Cato was forced to resort to bribery to make sure his son-in-law was elected to co-consul.



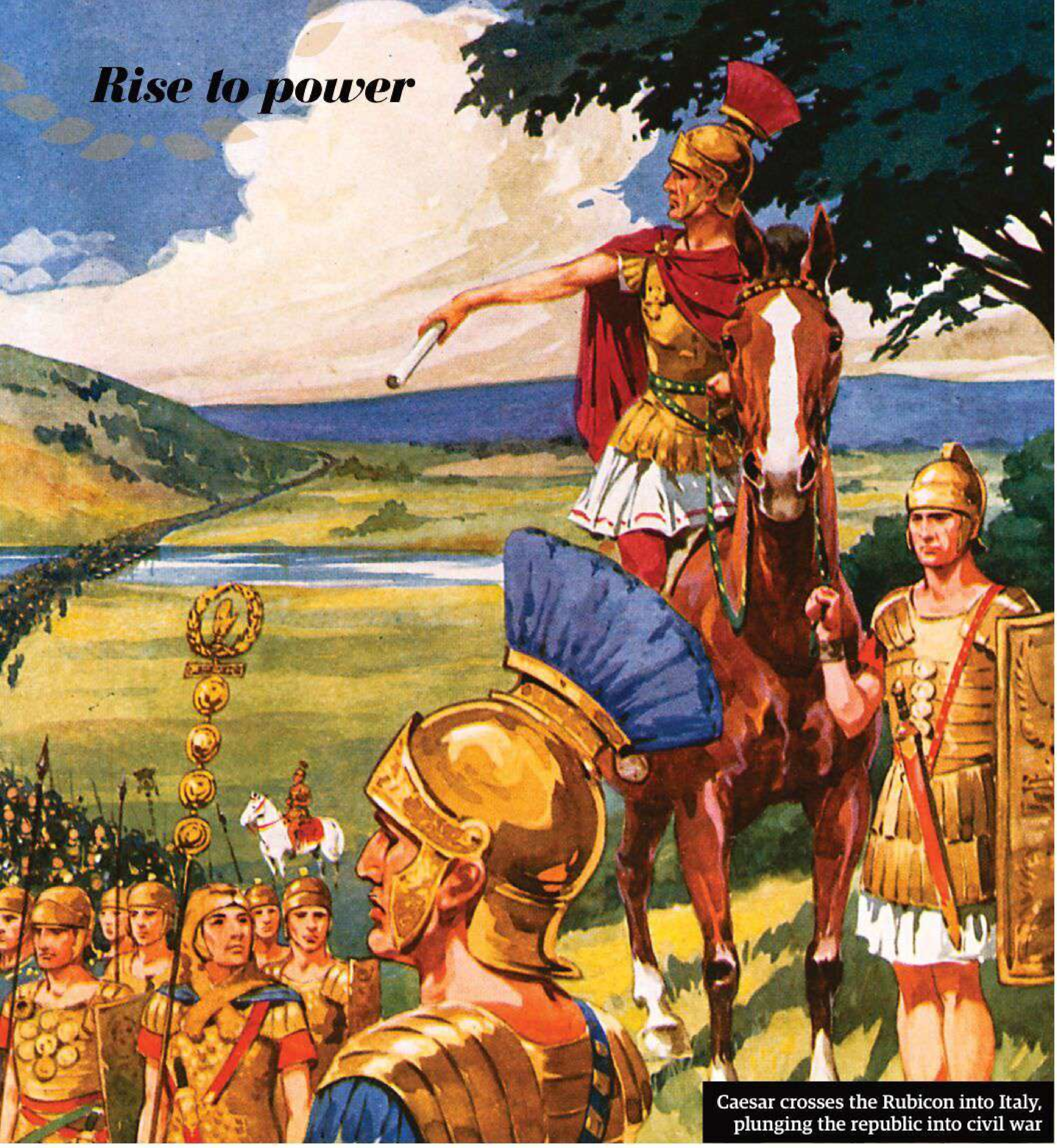
Marcus Crassus

Caesar needed financial support to run for consul and Crassus's wealth was notorious. He'd amassed a huge personal fortune through underhanded real-estate dealings, his mining operations, as well as slavery. Crassus was in a position to bankroll Caesar's military operations and to grease the palms of anyone who might be convinced to stand in his way. Once Caesar had convinced Crassus to overlook his long-standing rivalry with Pompey, the First Triumvirate had a bank. He would die fighting the Parthians, who reportedly poured molten gold into his mouth after executing him.



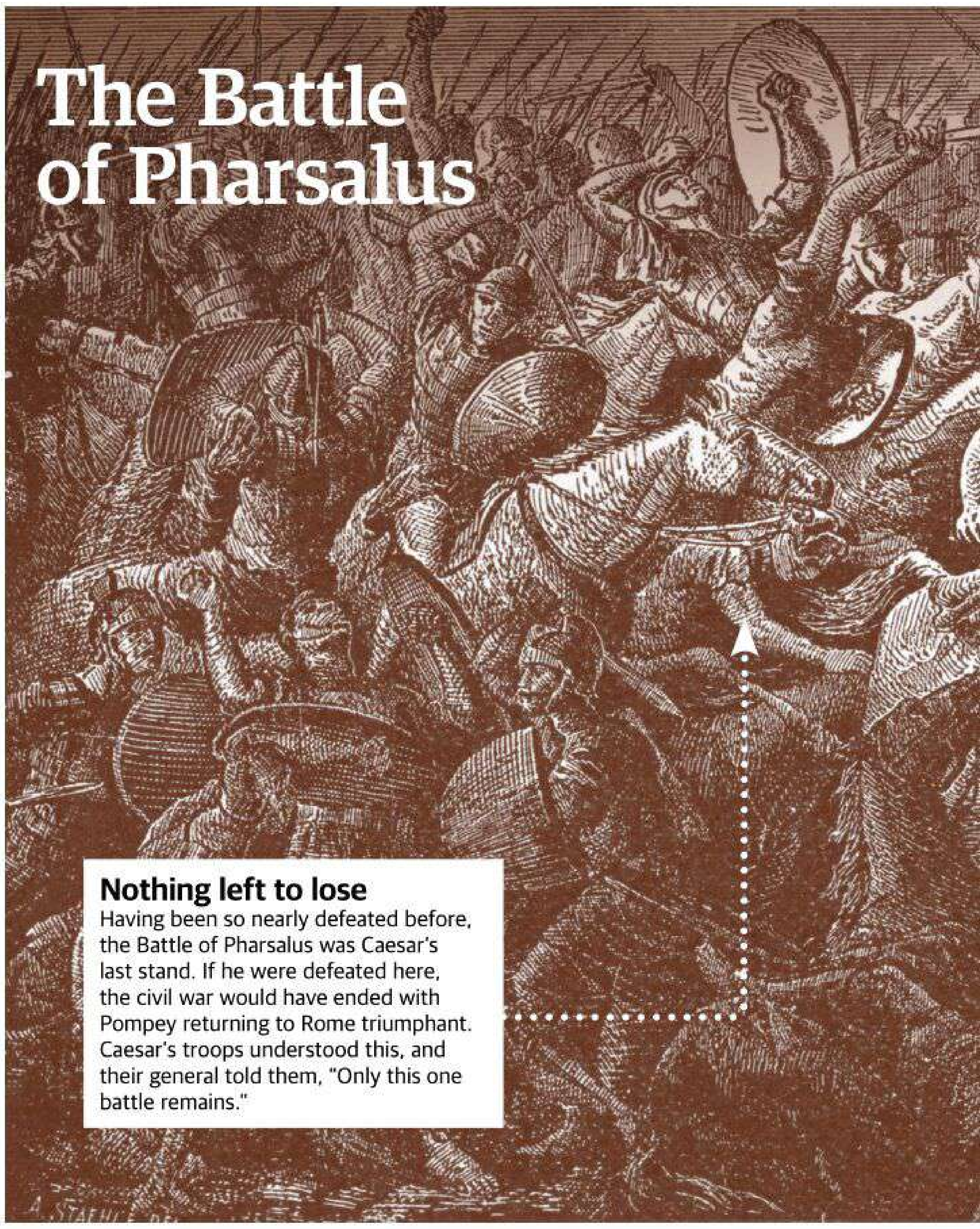
Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus

Pompey the Great was a renowned general who had served under Sulla. However, he was chafing under the new regime since they had not fulfilled the promises he had made to his troops in Syria and Judaea. He agreed to lend his muscle to Caesar's campaign in exchange for the guarantee that Caesar would make him a governor once elected. The deal was sealed with the marriage of Pompey to Caesar's daughter Julia and the general's troops began strong-arming and intimidating Caesar's opponents. However, once Caesar went to Gaul, Pompey quickly grew envious of his success and popularity.



Caesar crosses the Rubicon into Italy, plunging the republic into civil war

The Battle of Pharsalus



Nothing left to lose
Having been so nearly defeated before, the Battle of Pharsalus was Caesar's last stand. If he were defeated here, the civil war would have ended with Pompey returning to Rome triumphant. Caesar's troops understood this, and their general told them, "Only this one battle remains."

handle an outbreak of rioting and his success gained the approval of the aristocrats. Buoyed by his victory and sudden popularity in the Senate, Pompey was convinced that removing Caesar from the political scene was the right thing to do. It would not be that easy. At this point, an attack from Gallic chieftain Vercingetorix, who knew of the riots in Rome, nearly destroyed Caesar. The Roman general had laid siege to the chieftain, but was forced to set up a wall to their rear when Gallic reinforcements arrived. The Romans came perilously close to defeat, but, luckily, an extraordinary last-minute counterattack won the day and finally confirmed that Caesar had conquered Gaul.

In late-50 BCE, preparations were underway for Caesar's return. Both Pompey and Caesar were ordered by the Senate to hand back their powers. But Caesar had no intention of being tried for his crimes and planned to run for consul in absentia. He hoped that the popularity he'd built up during his years at war would push the Senate into allowing this, and had published an account of his wars in Gaul to help remind the public of his many brave and successful military campaigns. The Gallic Wars was written using powerful, emotive language that could be read by anyone, not just the well-educated elite. Unlike Pompey, Caesar wasn't talking to the boxes – he was addressing the entire theatre. Despite this, the Senate refused and demanded that Caesar hand over command of his armies and return to Rome to face his accusers.

On 10 January 49 BCE, Caesar had essentially run out of options. If he did what the Senate demanded, he would be prosecuted and all his work would be for nothing. On the other hand, if he did not, it was an act of war.

There are reports that Caesar was restless the night before, and even spoke with a spirit. Whatever happened and whatever hesitation he had felt, it was gone by morning. He assembled his forces and took the step that would change the course of history. "The die is cast," he proclaimed, and crossed the Rubicon River from Gaul into northern Italy. After decades of conflict with his enemies in the Senate, they were finally at war.

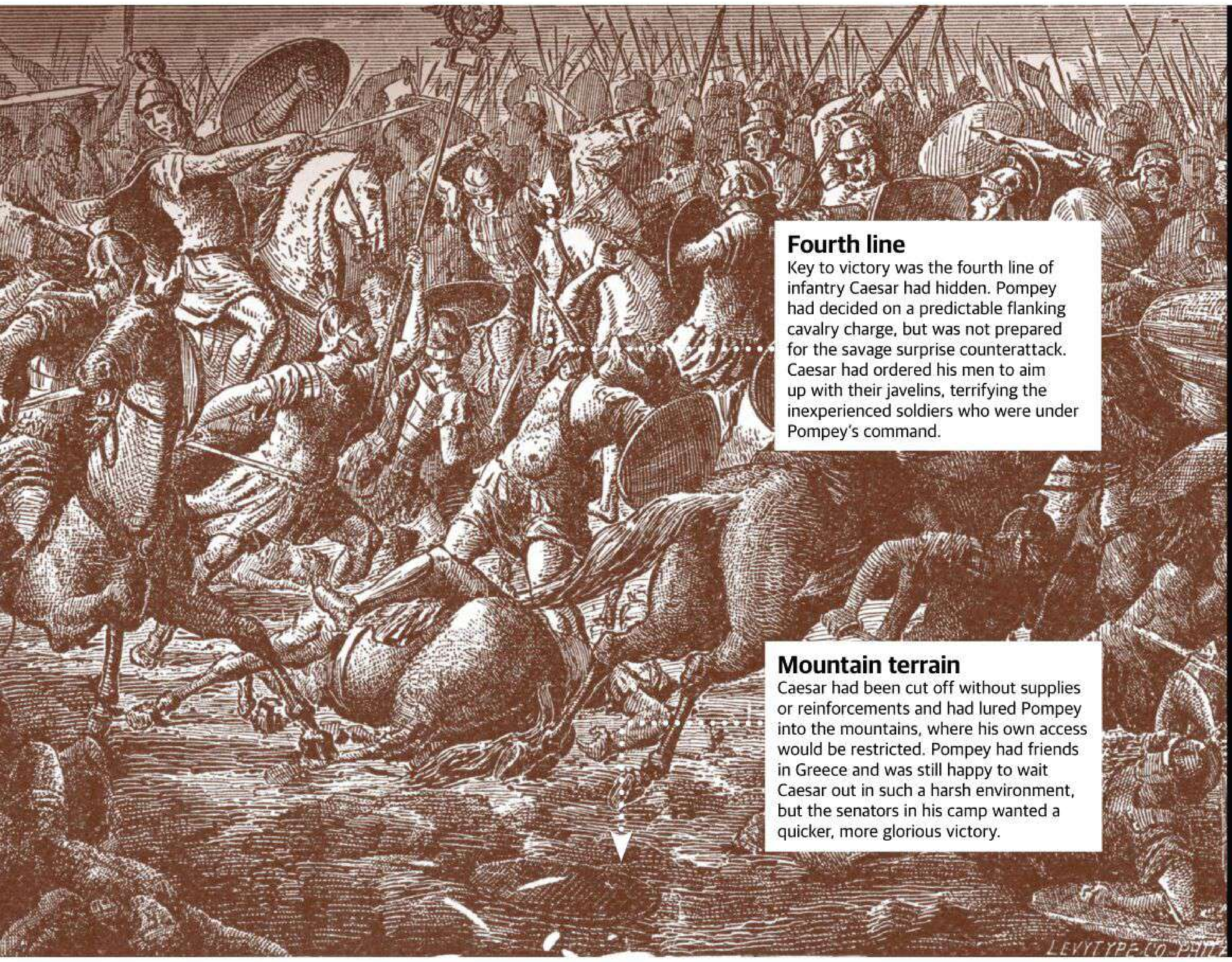
In their terror at his military might and daring, the Senate floundered. Caesar faced next to no opposition as he travelled into Italy. Pompey had blithely assumed that an attack wouldn't come until spring and most of his forces were still in Spain. After much panicked deliberating, Pompey announced that he would sail east to Greece to raise an army and that anybody opposing this plan would be a traitor. When Pompey slipped through his fingers, Caesar called a nearly deserted Senate together to approve military action in Spain.

While Pompey fled east , the new dictator wasted no time cutting a bloody swathe through his troops in the west. Pompey's forces were facing a determined, experienced army and Caesar's campaign was quick and brutal, decimating his opponents in just 27 days. Caesar then turned his attention back to his former ally and pursued him to Greece, where he was in the process of trying to raise another army. Caesar broke through a barricade set up by Bibulus, but he was cut off without supplies or reinforcements.

The subsequent fighting was disastrous and Caesar and his troops were on their last legs. Pompey had learned from his old friend's tactics in Gaul and set about starving his enemies. Caesar couldn't sit and wait Pompey out; if he was to win it would have to be on the battlefield. Finally, the two armies met at Pharsalus, where Caesar delivered a stunningly decisive victory against overwhelming odds (looked at in more detail in the boxout). Once again, Pompey was in the wind.

As Pompey fled south to Egypt, Caesar returned to Rome to pronounce himself dictator, but resigned after just 11 days before picking up the chase once again. However, if he expected a fight, he wasn't going to get one. Pompey had been betrayed by the very people he had sought sanctuary from, and his corpse was presented

> "Buoyed by his popularity, Pompey was convinced that removing Caesar from the political scene was the right thing"



Fourth line
Key to victory was the fourth line of infantry Caesar had hidden. Pompey had decided on a predictable flanking cavalry charge, but was not prepared for the savage surprise counterattack. Caesar had ordered his men to aim up with their javelins, terrifying the inexperienced soldiers who were under Pompey's command.

Mountain terrain
Caesar had been cut off without supplies or reinforcements and had lured Pompey into the mountains, where his own access would be restricted. Pompey had friends in Greece and was still happy to wait Caesar out in such a harsh environment, but the senators in his camp wanted a quicker, more glorious victory.

Separated from his legions in Spain, Pompey had fled to Greece to raise another army. After decimating his old ally's forces in the west, Caesar followed him east.

Unlike Pompey, Caesar had no allies in Greece. He was outnumbered, and any reinforcements and supplies had been cut off. It was by sheer force of will that his army managed to keep up their campaign, but Caesar knew he was fast running out of time. He needed an even playing field and marched away from the sea and into the mountains, hoping Pompey would follow.

Pompey, meanwhile, had been buoyed by a major victory over Caesar's forces at Dyrrachium, but he was pained by the fact he could have beaten his enemy once and for all if he had pressed on. Once he caught up near Pharsalus, Pompey attempted to starve Caesar out, while Caesar in return wanted to coax him into open battle. The two sat at stalemate until Pompey's impatient senators told him they wanted victory now.

Despite holding the higher ground, the better supplies and the far superior numbers, Pompey used a tactic that Caesar knew all too well. While attempting to outflank Caesar's forces, Pompey did not see that his opponent had created a hidden fourth line of infantry. The flanking cavalry charged but did not anticipate the savage counterattack that followed. As instructed, Caesar's troops stabbed up at the cavalry with their javelins, terrifying Pompey's young aristocratic commanders who were unused to such a fierce tactic. The cavalry retreated and this fourth line gave chase, followed by the fresh third line. Pompey's forces were crushed and the general himself fled to Egypt. The decisive battle of the Caesar's Civil War had been won.

to Caesar by the child pharaoh Ptolemy XIII as a tribute. They didn't get the reaction they expected. Caesar was reduced to tears and ordered the execution of those who slayed his enemy. The final obstacle to his absolute power had been removed.

Looking out on the Nile, Caesar was able to see what such power could mean. He fell for Cleopatra after she reportedly smuggled herself into his rooms wrapped in a carpet and, acting out of sympathy for her and his own anger about the execution of Pompey, he fought with her against her brother Ptolemy in the Egyptian Civil War. The fighting that ensued was known as the Siege of Alexandria, during which Ptolemy refused Caesar's offers of peace and paid the ultimate price, drowning during the Battle of the Nile. The Egyptian queen claimed to have had a son named Caesarion with her lover, but he would never acknowledge that the boy was his. Once Cleopatra was firmly established on the throne of Egypt, Caesar sailed to Asia Minor to quash a rebellion led by Pharnaces. His victory was so swift that it led to his inifinitely famous boast "Veni, vidi, vici." The words "I came, I saw, I conquered" weren't specific to just this single, individual battle. Caesar truly was unstoppable.

Even as he celebrated victory, Caesar knew he had spent too long abroad and needed to establish and maintain his power in Rome. It was vital that power be absolute, but gave the appearance of not being so. He was elected as Rome's dictator in 48 BCE for a term of one year. He spent this time mopping up the final resistance to his rule, including Pompey's sons in Spain and the elusive Cato in Utica, Tunisia. The hunt for the latter would take Caesar to North Africa, where he would defeat the troops of Scipio and offer them no mercy. In a final act of defiance, Cato took his own life rather than face an empire under Caesar's sole rule.

The Senate rewarded Caesar's triumphs by appointing him dictator for ten years. With Pompey's supporters disposed of, Caesar returned to Rome to reform the empire. His plan was threefold. He needed to ensure that there was no military resistance to him; he needed to deal with the serious debt that Rome had accumulated during its years at war; and he needed to turn the empire from a collection of states into one nation. Between 48 BCE and his assassination in 44, Caesar would show himself to be far more than a military dictator, not only laying the foundations for but taking the first decisive steps towards making the Roman Empire what it would become. The 60-odd men who conspired against and assassinated him in the Senate on 15 March 44 BCE may have succeeded in their task, but Caesar's legacy had long since been assured.

> Pompey and Caesar were not always rivals - in fact, Pompey even married Caesar's daughter, Julia, in 59 BCE.

Caesar the dictator

Throughout his regime, Caesar had used the approval of the people to his advantage. When he returned to Rome having defeated Pompey, Caesar knew it was crucial to keep the people onside. Mistakes were made along the way though. When he celebrated his win over Pompey's son in Spain, it was seen as a serious faux-pas as such festivities were reserved for victories over foreign foes, not the sons of former consuls.

His political reforms, however, addressed some of the major concerns many had aired. He understood that, if Rome was to truly be an empire, it could no longer hold back the benefits of living under Roman rule from those living outside Italy. With this in mind, he opened up citizenship to those living in Gaul, and encouraged people to relocate to the empire's territories. He reduced debt and he ensured that soldiers who had fought for him would have land to settle on. He also introduced the new calendar, aligning the months with the solar year rather than the Moon.

To ensure opposition against him in the Senate was minimal, Caesar expanded their ranks. Each position was now open to more candidates, making the aristocratic elite that opposed him less of a majority. Although he wore the purple robes of a king, sat on a throne in the Senate and had his face on the empire's coins, Caesar was careful to keep up appearances that he was a duly elected official. The ease with which his loyal general Mark Antony was able to step into power and pursue those who had assassinated Caesar shows the level of popularity the late ruler had maintained during his years as Rome's dictator.

© Getty; Look and Learn; Joe Cummings

The First Triumvirate

With great power comes the chance to undermine your enemies, but at some point it all has to come crashing down

What do you do when you want to control the Roman Republic? Julius Caesar found two other men who wanted the same thing, so that together they could dominate the Senate.

While Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, known to history as Pompey or Pompey the Great, was elected consul a few times, the first was with Marcus Licinius Crassus in 70 BCE. Although two men sharing the top job was supposed to keep the peace and discourage one taking too much power for themselves, this inherently caused rivalries - Pompey and Crassus were no different. What Crassus wanted most of all was military glory and he tried everything that he could to stop the more experienced Pompey from gaining more influence over the Senate. He ultimately failed.

But tensions between the two actually started before that, in 73 BCE when Spartacus rose up. Crassus had been given command of the military force sent to crush the slave revolt but things started to look bad. Begrudgingly, he asked the Senate for reinforcements and they sent an army with Pompey at its head. While Spartacus was killed in battle by Crassus' troops, his fleeing followers were slaughtered by Pompey's men and it was Pompey who claimed the victory. The two were at odds ever since.

However, one man could bring them together, and that was Julius Caesar. Driven by a desire for glory and power, he approached both in 60 BCE with an aim to bring the three most powerful men in Rome together to bypass any opposition. All three men were struggling with something. Pompey had just returned to Rome after fighting Mithridates in the east and was after land for his veterans and for the Senate to ratify his organisation of the eastern territories, but the Senate refused. Meanwhile, despite his huge wealth, Crassus was struggling with the taxes in Asia and wanted a politician who could represent his interests in the Senate. Caesar realised that having him in the fold would be financially beneficial and there was the added bonus that Crassus was willing to sponsor him to become Pontifex Maximus, the highest priest in Rome. Caesar himself wanted the triumvirate formed before he stood for consul - with powerful men behind him, how could he not be elected?

Following his death, the Parthians allegedly poured molten gold into Crassus' mouth to symbolise his greed.

The three banded together and formed a private agreement with no agenda. Really, their only aim was to use each other to bypass the Senate to further each other's aims. It was cemented as one would expect: with intermarriages. Caesar's daughter Julia was married off to Pompey in what appears to have been a happy match. Meanwhile Caesar took Calpurnia, daughter of Piso, a close friend and client of Crassus, as his bride.

In 59 BCE, things were looking up with the election of Caesar as consul. The downside, however, was that his colleague was to be Marcus Calpurnius Bibulus, a close friend of the conservative Cato the Younger who Caesar had never managed to get along with. Caesar's first act in office was to pass a law making all the Senate's

After the death of Crassus, Pompey and Caesar's relationship held for several years before descending into a ferocious civil war debates and procedures public, making him seem heroic for the populist cause in the face of the conservatives in Senate. It was when he tried to fulfil his promise to Pompey of sanctioning his wishes that Bibulus became a thorn in the triumvirate's side.

Caesar managed to develop a land bill offering unused land in Italy for Pompey's veterans that was carefully written to deter political resistance. He then personally read each section of it to the Senate, offering open debate and promising to remove any part that they disliked; he even excluded himself from any oversight committees related to the law.

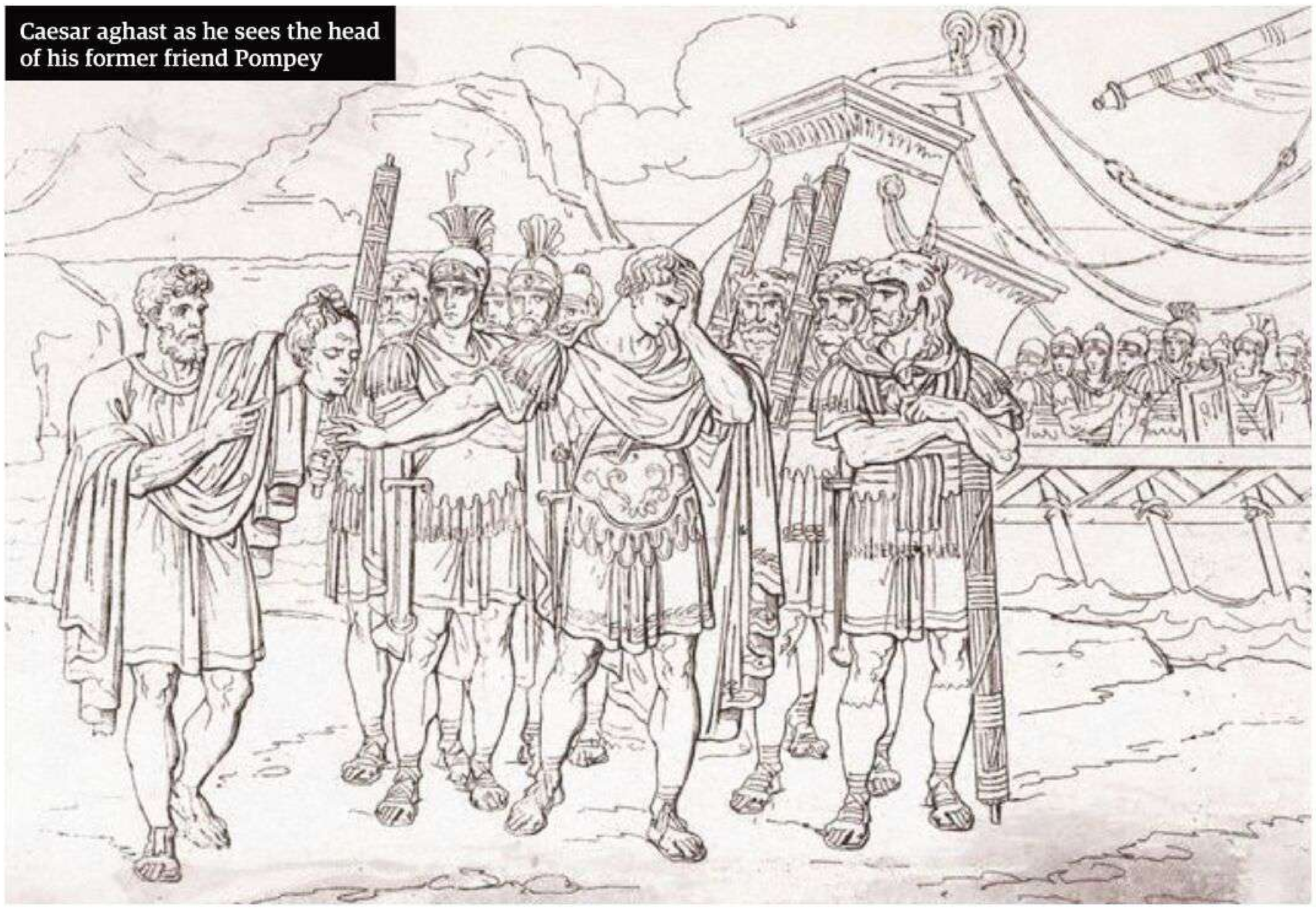
However, Cato the Younger began stirring trouble when he opposed the bill and the rest of the conservatives followed suit. Meeting after meeting, debate after debate, Cato didn't let up and Bibulus, Caesar's co-consul, was in his pocket. Fed up, Caesar took the bill directly to the people. Speaking in front of a citizen assembly in the forum, he openly asked Bibulus what his feelings were - the bill would need the support of both consuls, after all. But Bibulus refused to budge, telling his peer that the law would never be passed, even if everyone else wanted it to be. That was his downfall.

The triumvirate that had been lurking in the shadows of Roman politics was unveiled as Pompey and Crassus, both standing in the crowd, loudly voiced their support for Caesar. Bibulus and his optimates tried desperately to stop it - the co-consul declared public holidays and bad omens to stop voting but Caesar, with the help of the wealthy Crassus, had become Pontifex Maximus. If anyone could declare bad omens it was him, not Bibulus, and he took the vote to the Temple of Castor. It was here that Bibulus made one last stand and tried to veto the entire process but it was to no avail. A basket of dung was thrown at his head and the optimates were driven away. The vote passed, Pompey got his land and Caesar effectively ruled alone for the rest of the year. The triumvirate were unstoppable with the ultimate power in Rome. Caesar pushed many reforms through the Senate that benefited all three of them. He ratified Pompey's changes to the layout of the Near East, distributed land among the urban poor and Pompey's veterans and made sure that Crassus received a financial agreement that was beneficial to his allies, the Roman knights.

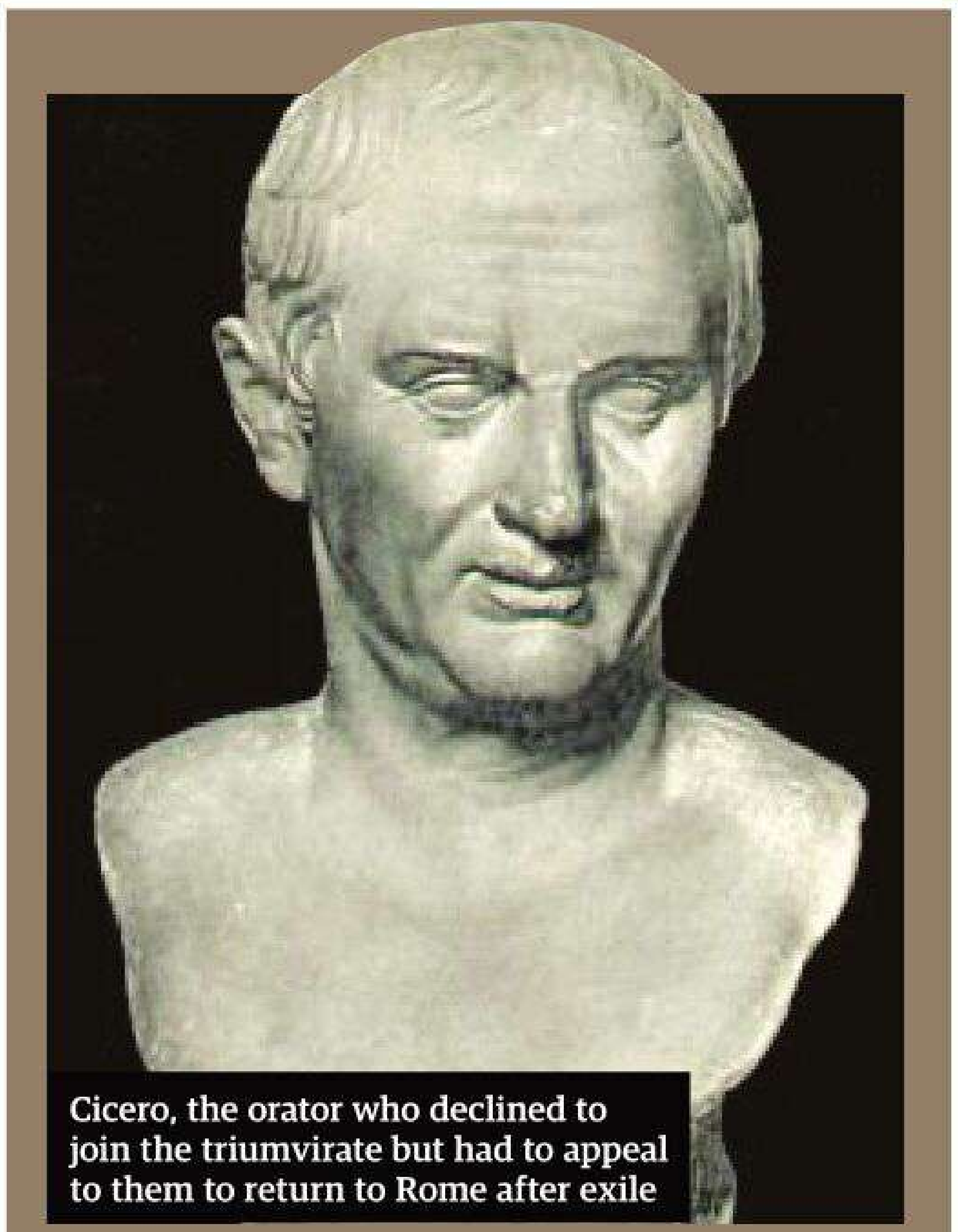
The Second Triumvirate of Mark Antony, Lepidus and Octavian formed after Julius Caesar's death in 44 BCE.

Once Caesar's year in office was up, the alliance became spread across Rome's territories. This was when the cracks began to appear. While Pompey and Crassus remained in Rome, Caesar made his way to Gaul as its governor with four legions under his command. By 56 BCE, relations were getting tenuous. While Pompey was still important to Caesar because of his military and political power, Crassus was becoming less so. At the same time, neither Crassus nor the Senate were coming to

"The triumvirate were unstoppable with the ultimate power in Rome"



Caesar aghast as he sees the head of his former friend Pompey



Cicero, the orator who declined to join the triumvirate but had to appeal to them to return to Rome after exile

Friends and foes

As you would expect, the First Triumvirate had its supporters and its enemies. Firmly on their side, though, was Cicero, a politician and orator who was strongly opposed to the optimates in the Senate. In fact, he was on such good terms with the triumvirate that he appealed to Pompey and Caesar to help him return to Rome in 57 BCE after his exile. It's even thought that he was asked to join the triumvirate at the very beginning. He refused but that didn't stop him from lending his legal services. His friend Lucius Lucceius also ran for the consulship with Caesar in 60 BCE and financed both of them, even though he was ultimately unsuccessful.

But the trio perhaps had more enemies than friends. Bibulus, Caesar's co-consul, was part of the optimates faction, the conservatives who were eager to block the radical reforms of the populares. Another of their rivals was Cato the Younger, who later attacked the triumvirate for their extended governorships.

But there was one man whose opposition to the three men led to the triumvirate's birth in the first place. Lucius Licinius Lucullus, a member of the optimates, was forcibly removed from his post in the east when his invasion of Armenia nearly brought the dreaded Parthians into the conflict. Instead, Pompey was brought in to take his place and the glory. And when consul Quintus Caecilius Metellus Celer voted against Pompey's veteran settlements, Pompey had no reason not to join forces with Caesar and Crassus.

CATON D'UTIQUE

Cato the Younger hated the idea of Caesar being in power so much that he committed suicide in 46 BCE

Pompey's aid when Clodius, a tribune, began working against him. Pompey started to become paranoid, convinced that Crassus was plotting to have him killed. Everything was falling apart.

Caesar returned to Rome briefly in the winter in an attempt to keep the triumvirate going. Crassus and Pompey agreed to stay on board, but only if they could have armies. Pompey was granted the province of Hispania and Crassus Syria… along with a war against the Parthians. Perfect for him to prove his military might.

The triumvirate also decided that Crassus and Pompey would become co-consuls in 55 BCE, something that would be secured by Caesar's men in Rome. Once their consular terms had come to an end, they would retire to Hispania and Syria. Caesar's term in Gaul was to be extended so that they would all finish their governorships at the same time – after all, if Caesar returned to Rome first, what would stop him from taking all of the power for himself? The triumvirate was back on track.

But the three men felt a swift blow when Julia passed away during childbirth two years later in 54 BCE. She had been the main thread holding Caesar and Pompey together as the woman they both loved so dearly. A couple of days later, her baby died, too. Without Julia to keep the peace, squabbling between the two men was inevitable. Somehow the triumvirate held together, but the worst was yet to come.

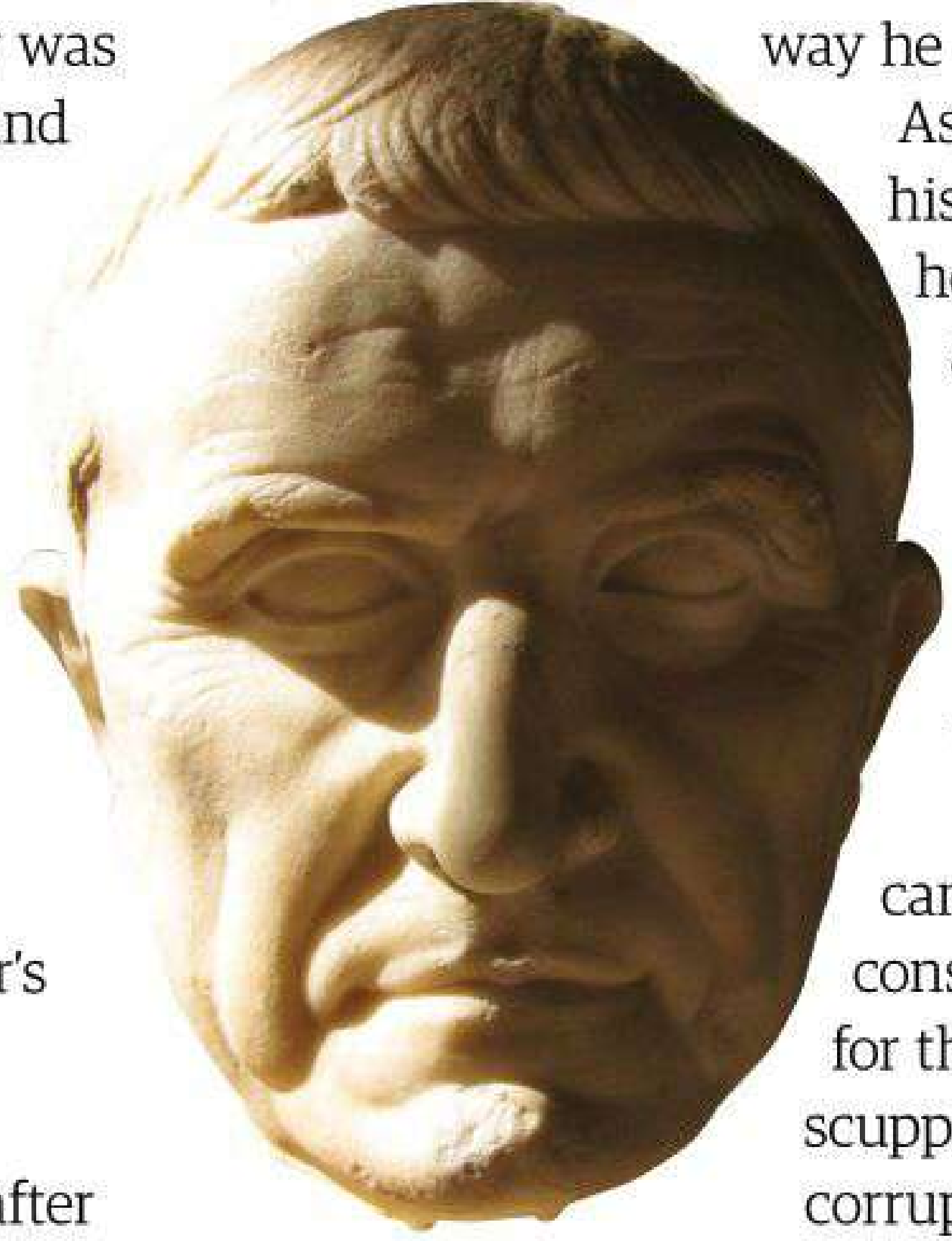
In 53 BCE, Crassus was fighting at the Battle of Carrhae against the Parthian Empire. His forces were divided and when truce negotiations turned violent, Crassus and his men were massacred. With only two men left, the triumvirate was over.

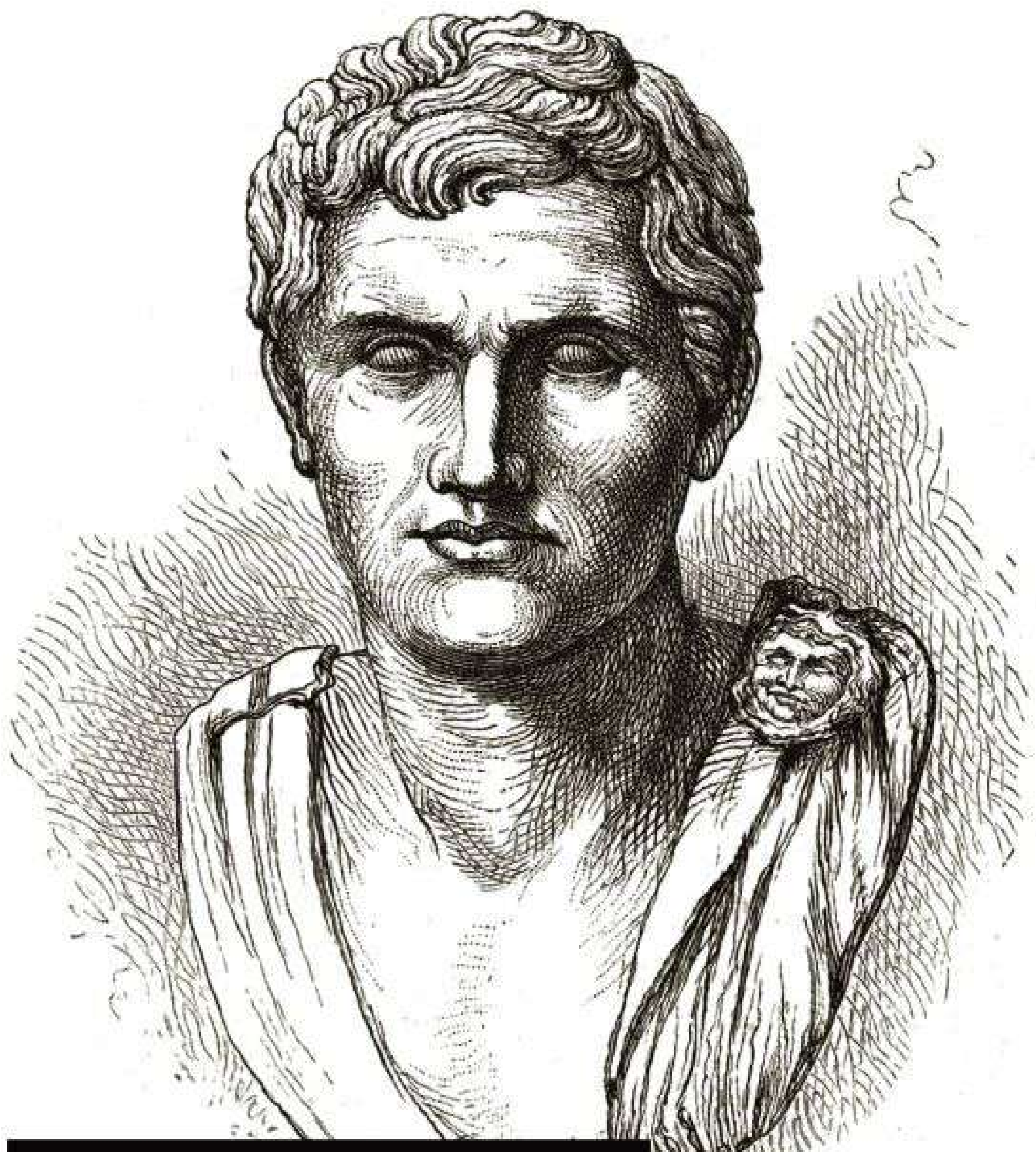
Pompey could see that Caesar was gaining power as he led the Gallic Wars and so he decided to build up strength through urban magistracies. What he didn't realise, however, was that Caesar had been doing this for years – there was no way he could win.

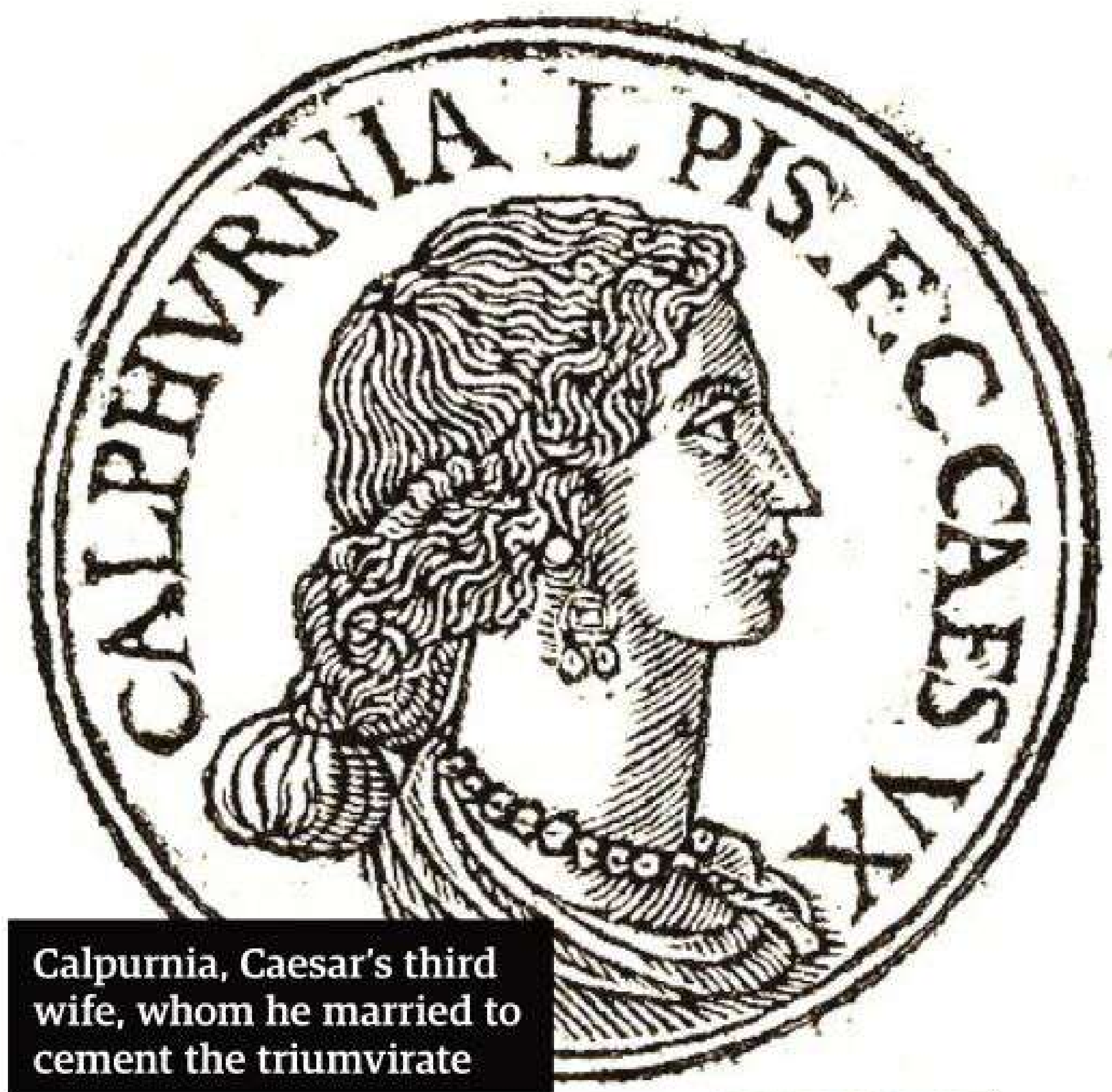
As a peace offering, Caesar offered his great-niece Octavia to Pompey, hoping that the two would marry and everything would be calm again. Pompey refused, however, causing their alliance to break down further and adding to the uneasiness that was spreading throughout Rome.

The final nail in the coffin came when Pompey was appointed consul and allowed Caesar to stand for the position in absentia – but then scuppered his ally's chances with anti-corruption legislation. Civil war was becoming inevitable in Rome and it got closer with every step Caesar took towards the Rubicon in 49 BCE.

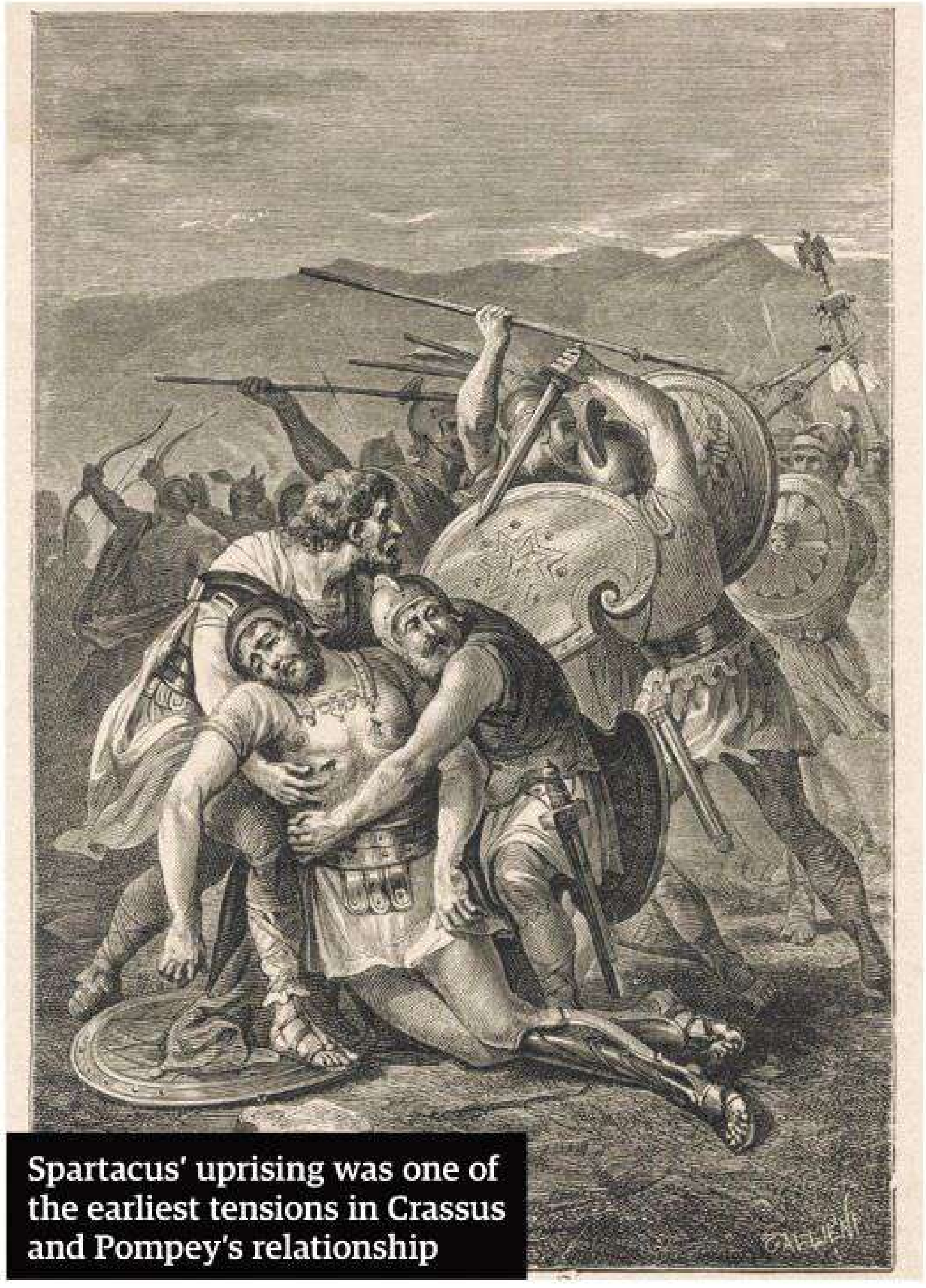
Caesar and Pompey, the only two men left of the triumvirate, were enemies in the civil war. Pompey wanted to fight for the republic while Caesar, ever the radical, wanted change. But Pompey fled the city and found himself in Egypt under the care of Ptolemy XIII but he was assassinated by the king's officers. Caesar wept when he heard the news and had the assassins killed but perhaps he was secretly happy about the death of his former ally. Out of an alliance that had seen three men clambering to be the ruler of Rome, one man had remained victorious and he couldn't be stopped.


Crassus is considered to have been the wealthiest man in the late Roman Republic

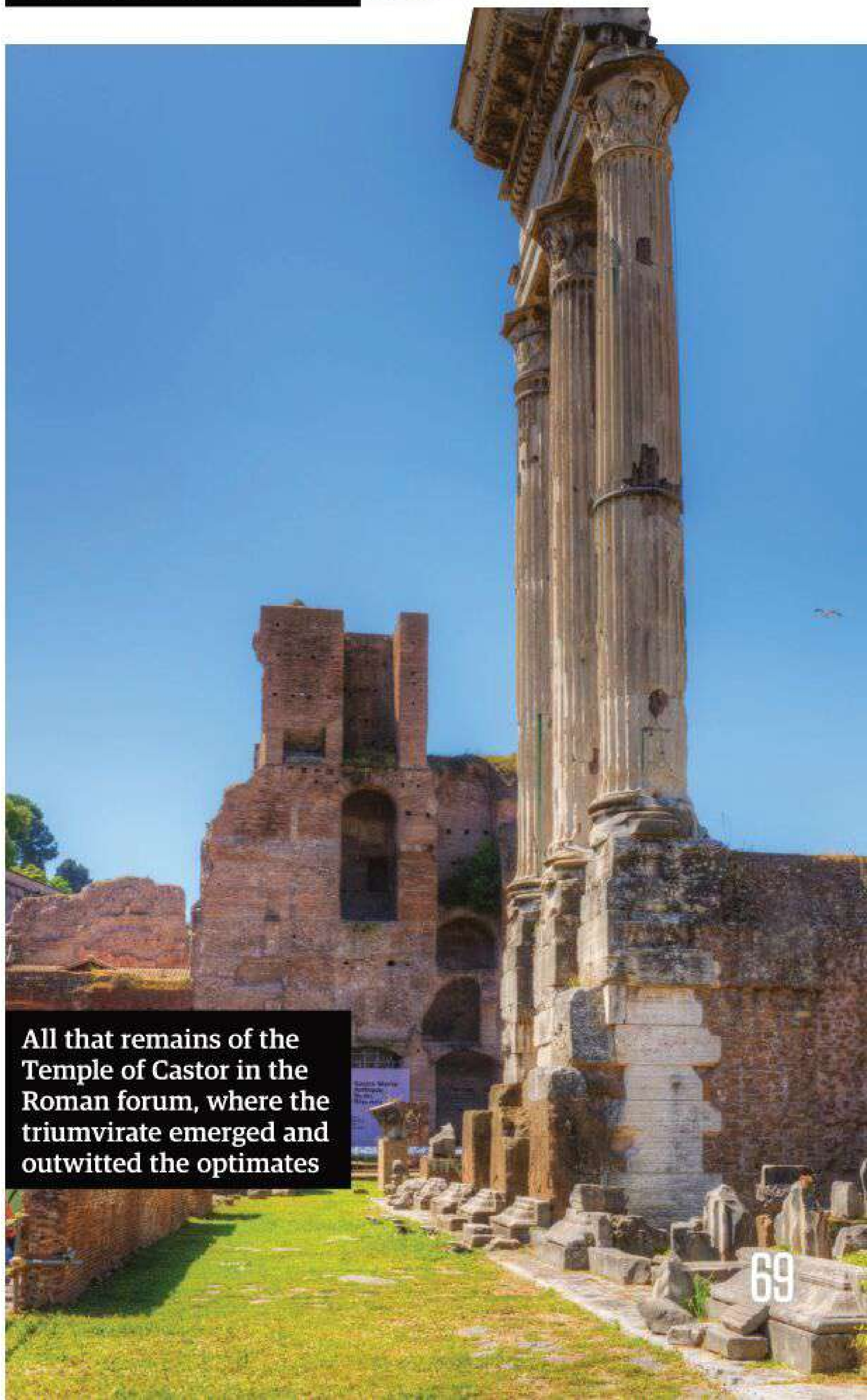

An engraving of Pompey the Great, who lived from 106 to 48 BCE

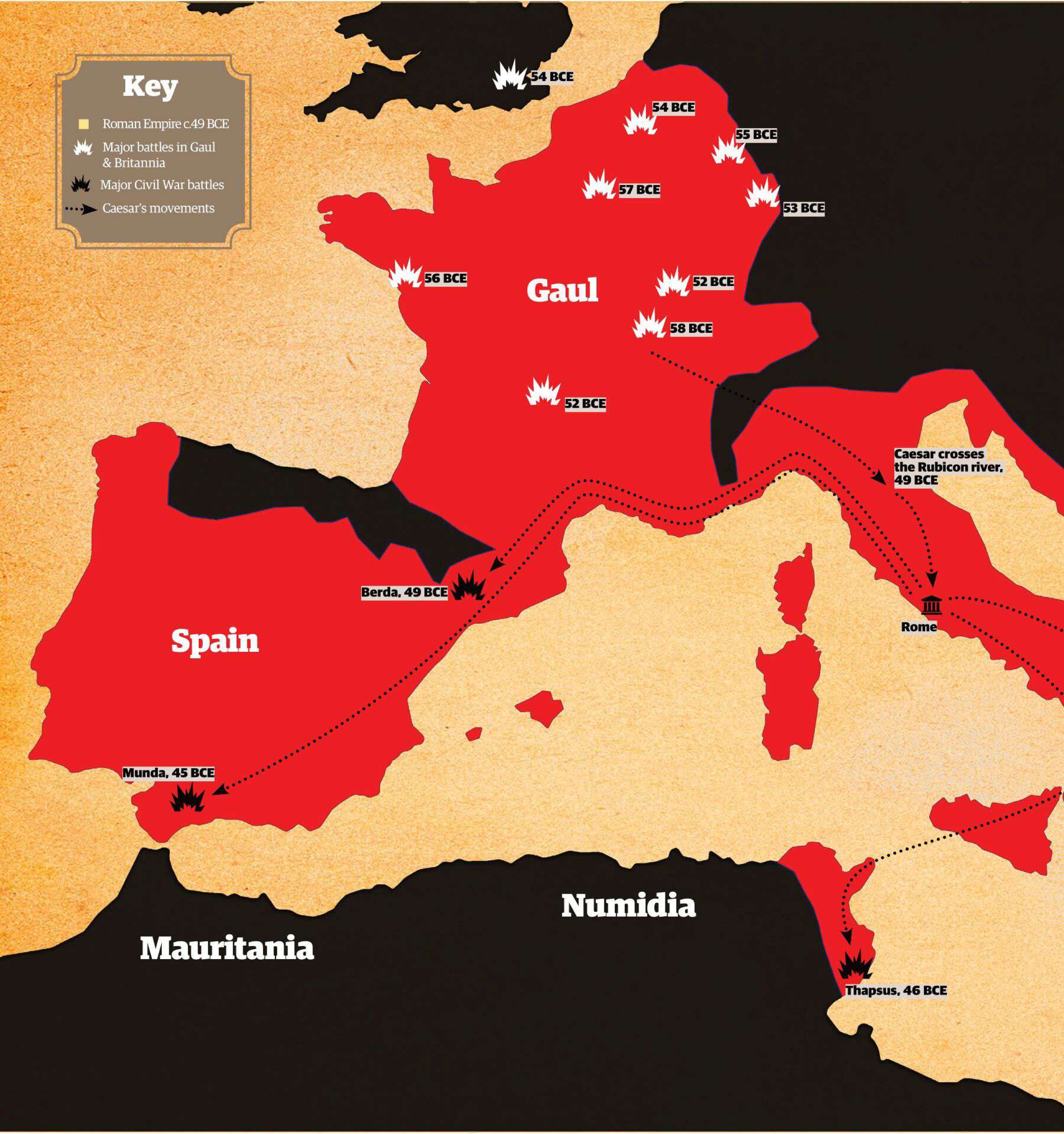


Calpurnia, Caesar's third wife, whom he married to cement the triumvirate


Spartacus' uprising was one of the earliest tensions in Crassus and Pompey's relationship

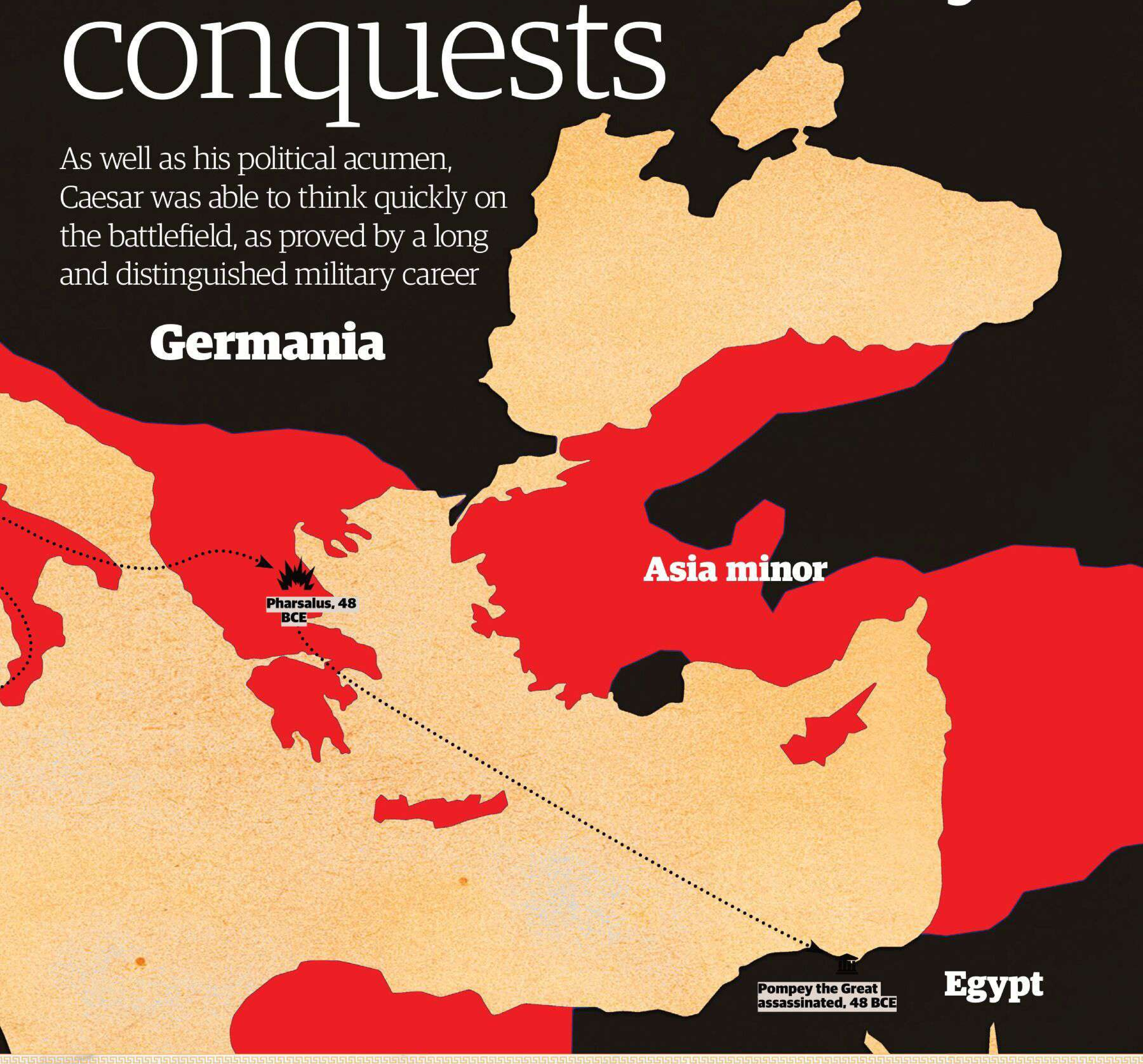
Caesar was the driving force behind the First Triumvirate and he was the one who gained the most in the end


All that remains of the Temple of Castor in the Roman forum, where the triumvirate emerged and outwitted the optimates


Key
Roman Empire c.49 BCE
Major battles in Gaul & Britannia
Major Civil War battles
Caesar's movements
54 BCE
54 BCE
55 BCE
57 BCE
53 BCE
56 BCE
Gaul
52 BCE
58 BCE
52 BCE
Caesar crosses the Rubicon river, 49 BCE
Berda, 49 BCE
Spain
Rome
Munda, 45 BCE
Numidia
Mauritania
Thapsus, 46 BCE

Caesar's military conquests

As well as his political acumen, Caesar was able to think quickly on the battlefield, as proved by a long and distinguished military career


Germania
Asia minor
Pharsalus, 48 BCE
Pompey the Great assassinated, 48 BCE
Egypt

The US general Wesley Clark has dubbed Julius Caesar, 'probably one of the two greatest soldier-statesmen in history', alongside Alexander the Great. Sharing in such an accolade would have brought a smile to Caesar's face, as he once lamented the fact that he had achieved so little compared to the great Macedonian commander.

Caesar's military career saw him win great victories in all corners of the Roman world, extending the state's boundaries, influence and fearful reputation in equal measure. His military achievements were no less complex and accomplished than his political manoeuvrings.

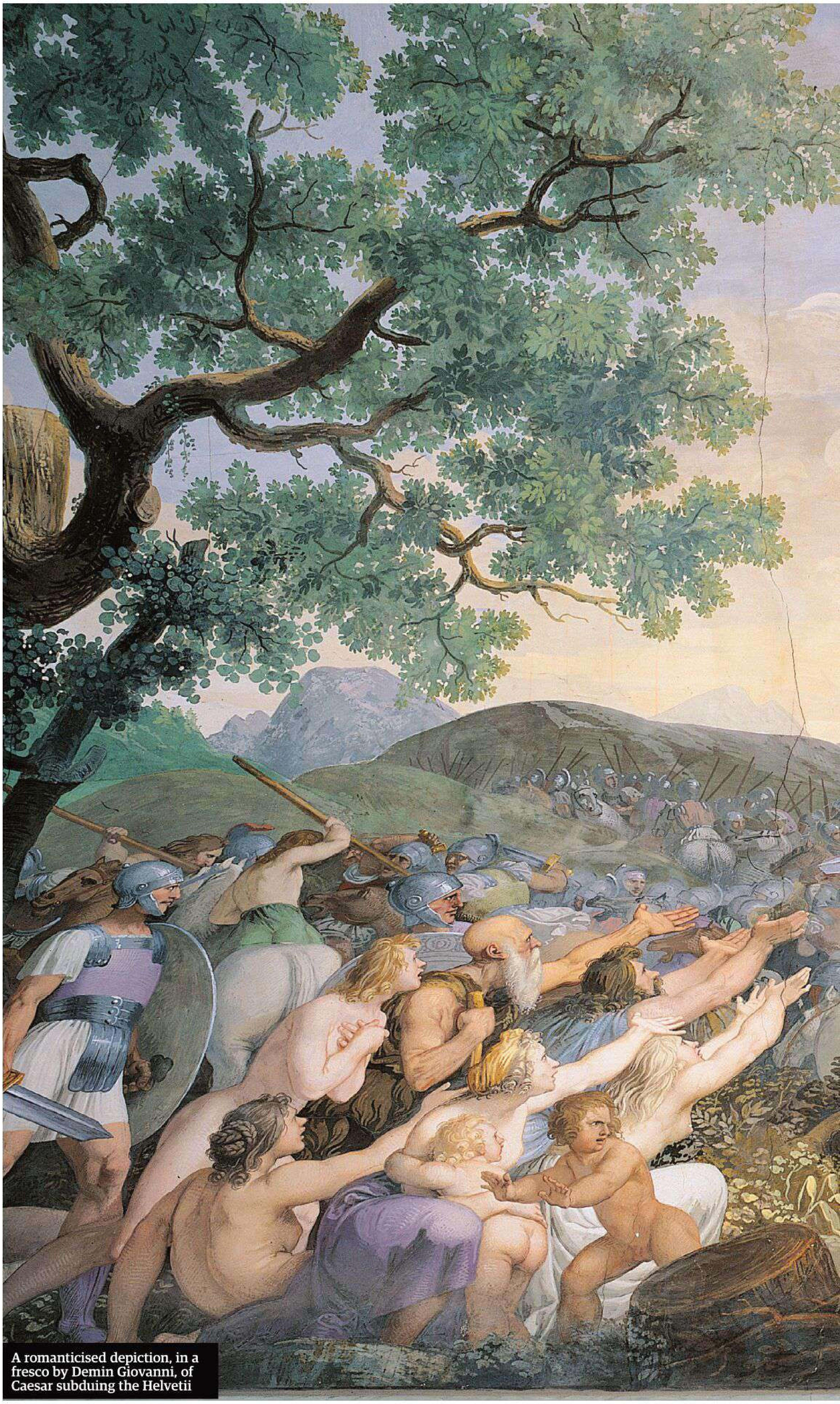
His flexibility, both tactical and strategic, allowed him to find victory in various ways. Far from a one-trick pony, he could annihilate a foe on the battlefield, strangle a city into submission by siege or absorb terrifying assaults before turning the tables. The passage of time inevitably casts new light on endeavours in the ancient world, and some of Caesar's tactics would today be considered war crimes, but he was also capable of remarkable restraint and forgiveness, especially when fighting fellow Romans during his Civil War campaigns. The impact he made on his world is undeniable. As biographer Bill Yenne states, he 'set the course of Roman rule for half a millennium'.

Rome was already a superpower when Caesar was born, and warfare was commonplace during his upbringing. His first military experience included being captured by Cilician pirates, which gave an early demonstration of his potential for ruthlessness - he was ransomed, captured his former captors and crucified them.

His career then took him to Hispania, where he found time to visit the statue of Alexander the Great at Cádiz. Caesar was 32, the same age at which Alexander had died after conquering the known world, and some reports claim Caesar was moved to tears of frustration by the unfavourable comparison.

But he had one major advantage over his illustrious role-model. While Alexander's military career had finished at 32, Caesar's had barely started.

> "Caesar's military career saw him win great victories in all corners of the Roman world, extending the state's boundaries, influence and fearful reputation"



A romanticised depiction, in a fresco by Demin Giovanni, of Caesar subduing the Helvetii

1. Gaul, 58-57 BCE

After being made proconsul of three provinces, for an unprecedented five-year term, Caesar set out to expand Rome's control of Gaul

A proconsulship normally covered a single province for just one year, but Caesar's powerful allies in Rome helped him to secure Illyricum (the Balkans) Cisalpine Gaul (northern Italy) and Transalpine Gaul (southern France).

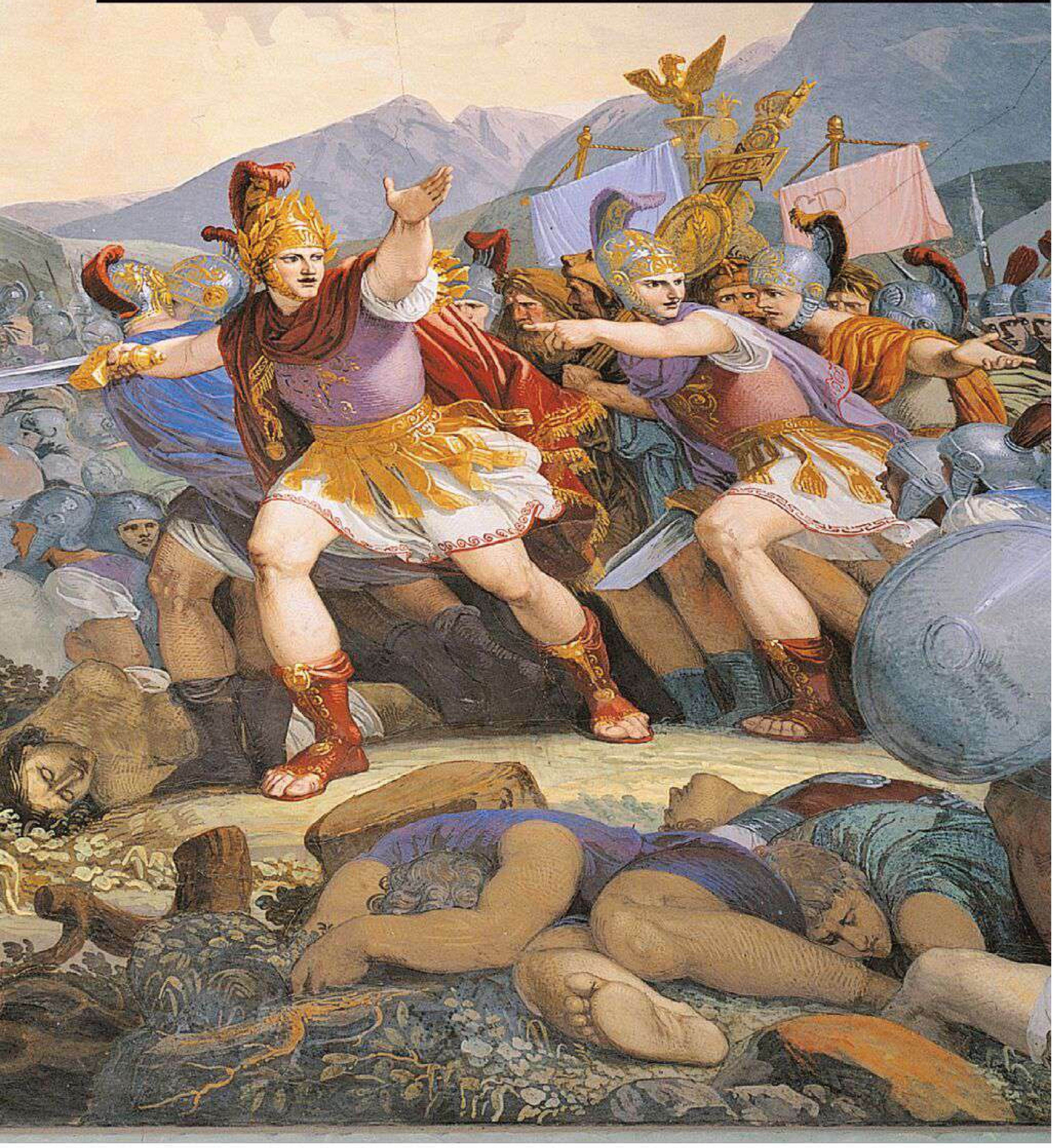
Determined to expand Roman influence, he looked over the border of Transalpine Gaul into a vast land contested by numerous warlike tribes.

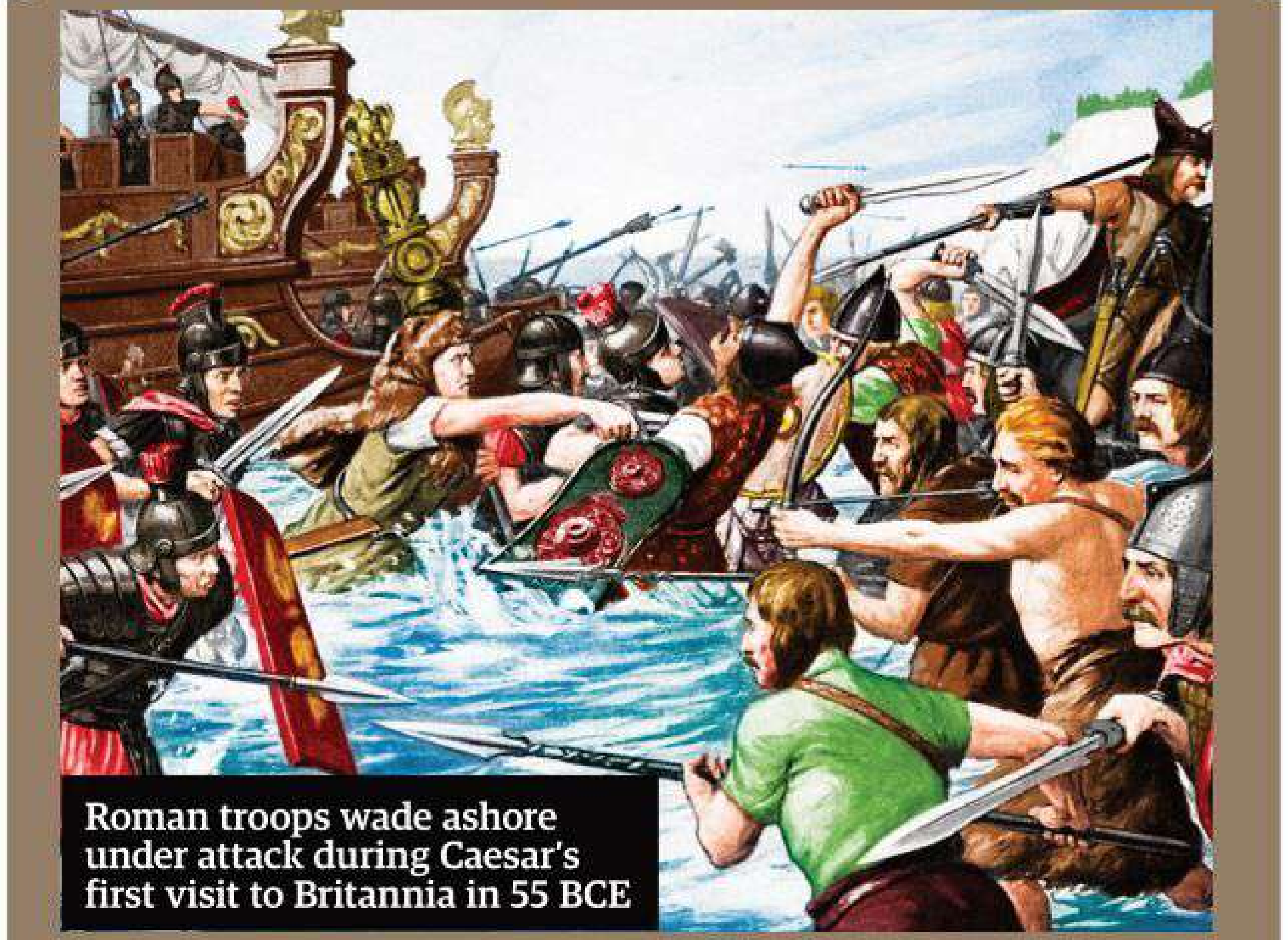
In 58 BCE a huge Helvetii host invaded southeastern Gaul, and Caesar moved to intercept them with six legions. He rated them as the most formidable of the Gaulish tribes and there was added incentive due to their humiliating defeat of a Roman force in 107 BCE.

At Bibracte, the Helvetii (the ancestors of the modern Swiss nation) were broken after a brutal battle that lasted from midday until evening.

Attention then turned to Germanic tribes, also looking to move into Gaul under the leadership of the crafty Ariovistus. The fierce reputation of these warriors caused rumblings of concern in the ranks as the six legions marched to take on tribes including the Suebi, Marcomanni and Nemetes. At the Battle of the Vosges the Germans rushed the Roman position so swiftly that there was no time to launch the traditional salvo of javelins before the lines clashed. The battle was going badly for the Romans when Publius Licinius Crassus ordered the reserve into action, strengthening the line and turning the tide of battle.

The following year, Caesar (now with eight legions, numbering around 40,000 men) took on and defeated the Belgae, utilising a masterly strategy of attacking each tribe individually before they could coalesce into an overwhelming unified force. With the final triumph coming at the Battle of the Sabis, Caesar had seen off three major incursions into Gaul and greatly extended Roman power into western Europe. The Gallic Wars had cost Caesar around 18,500 men, but he had killed, wounded or captured around 250,000 in turn.





Roman troops wade ashore under attack during Caesar's first visit to Britannia in 55 BCE

2. Britannia, 54 BCE

Having extended Roman power within known territories, Caesar became intrigued with the mysterious lands beyond

Germania and Britannia were lands of myth and legend. Caesar had already encountered Germanic tribes during his campaign of 58 BCE, while British Celts were also known in Gaul. The temptation to step into the lands of these warlike people, however, was strong, if only to prove that Rome feared nobody.

A small-scale crossing of the Rhine in 55 BCE was intended as little more than a show of force. Caesar impressed the Germanic tribes by building a bridge across the Rhine in just ten days, ripping it down again when he withdrew after an 18-day incursion. A message had been sent.

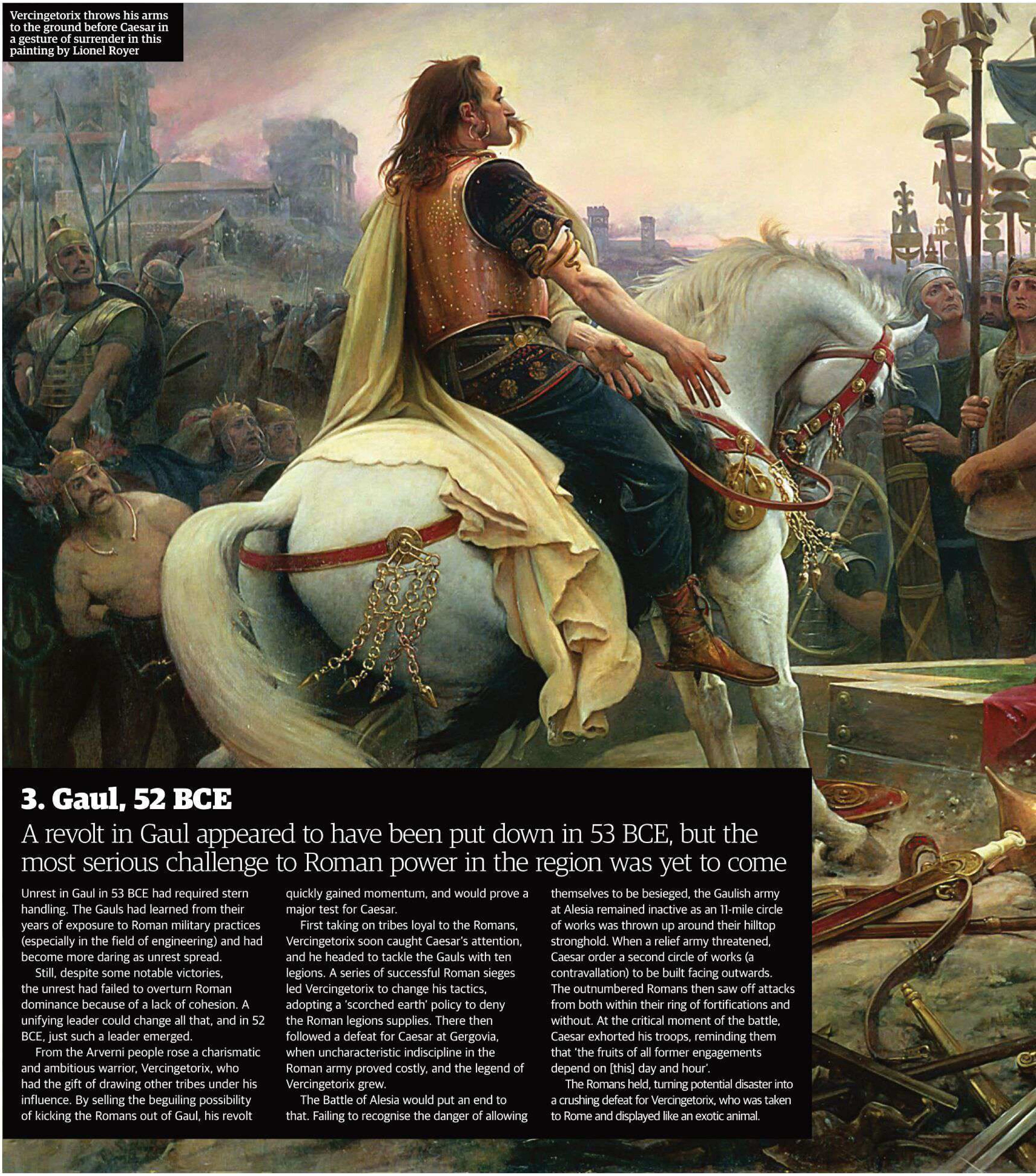
Caesar had more ambitious plans for Britannia. Early in Roman history it had been completely unknown, and the prospect of not only expanding Roman borders but also charting unknown territory was irresistible. Caesar intended to set up a permanent base in Britannia, but his first visit, in 55 BCE, was just a scouting mission.

When he returned a year later he had learned many valuable lessons. He started his campaign earlier, brought more supplies for his men and utilised shallow-draft boats for the initial landing. He also took five legions with him (his earlier probe had involved just two).

A well-organised and unopposed landing allowed him to move inland quickly, but he became bogged down as the Britons engaged in hit-and-run tactics, often luring legionaries into ambushes. 'All the Britons,' he wrote in his own book about his campaigns, 'dye themselves with woad, which occasions a bluish colour, and thereby have a more terrible appearance in battle.'

Resistance under the chieftain Cassivellaunus was stubborn, but Roman discipline began to tell and the Britons eventually sued for peace. Caesar returned to Gaul and never set foot in Britannia again, although he had extracted both hostages and an annual tribute.

> "The prospect of not only expanding Roman borders but also charting unknown territory was irresistible"



Vercingetorix throws his arms to the ground before Caesar in a gesture of surrender in this painting by Lionel Royer

3. Gaul, 52 BCE

A revolt in Gaul appeared to have been put down in 53 BCE, but the most serious challenge to Roman power in the region was yet to come

Unrest in Gaul in 53 BCE had required stern handling. The Gauls had learned from their years of exposure to Roman military practices (especially in the field of engineering) and had become more daring as unrest spread.

Still, despite some notable victories, the unrest had failed to overturn Roman dominance because of a lack of cohesion. A unifying leader could change all that, and in 52 BCE, just such a leader emerged.

From the Arverni people rose a charismatic and ambitious warrior, Vercingetorix, who had the gift of drawing other tribes under his influence. By selling the beguiling possibility of kicking the Romans out of Gaul, his revolt quickly gained momentum, and would prove a major test for Caesar.

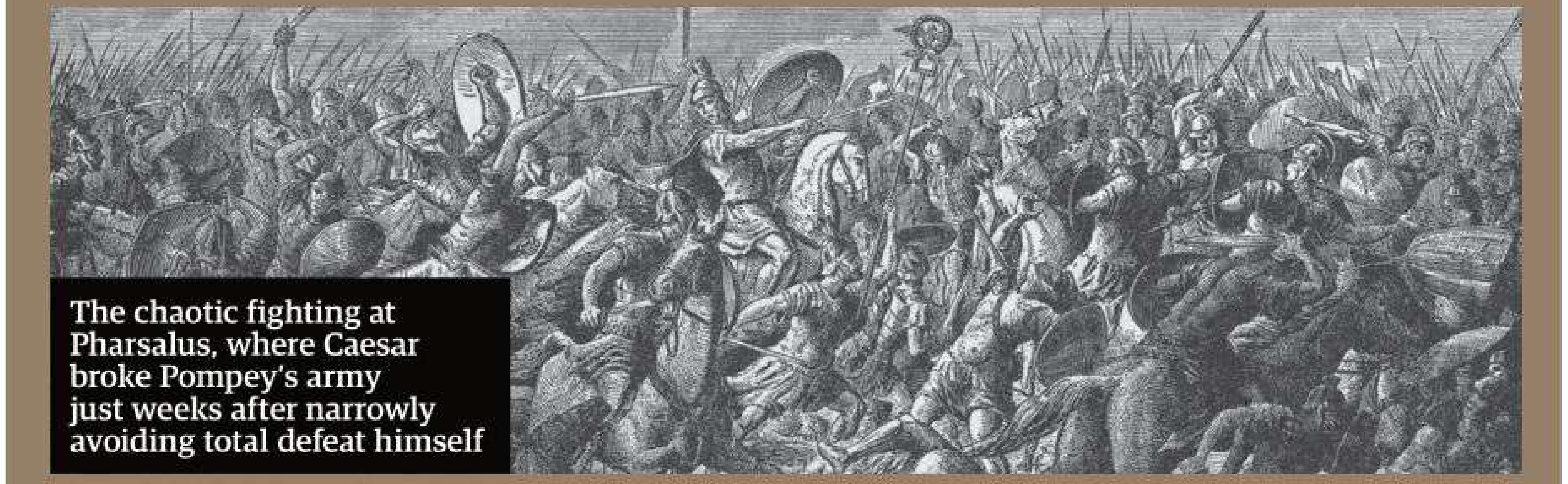
First taking on tribes loyal to the Romans, Vercingetorix soon caught Caesar's attention, and he headed to tackle the Gauls with ten legions. A series of successful Roman sieges led Vercingetorix to change his tactics, adopting a 'scorched earth' policy to deny the Roman legions supplies. There then followed a defeat for Caesar at Gergovia, when uncharacteristic indiscipline in the Roman army proved costly, and the legend of Vercingetorix grew.

The Battle of Alesia would put an end to that. Failing to recognise the danger of allowing themselves to be besieged, the Gaulish army at Alesia remained inactive as an 11-mile circle of works was thrown up around their hilltop stronghold. When a relief army threatened, Caesar order a second circle of works (a contravallation) to be built facing outwards. The outnumbered Romans then saw off attacks from both within their ring of fortifications and without. At the critical moment of the battle, Caesar exhorted his troops, reminding them that 'the fruits of all former engagements depend on [this] day and hour'.

The Romans held, turning potential disaster into a crushing defeat for Vercingetorix, who was taken to Rome and displayed like an exotic animal.

4. Thessaly, 48 BCE

Civil War saw Caesar pitted against former triumvirate member Pompey, but there was to be no mercy for his old colleague



The chaotic fighting at Pharsalus, where Caesar broke Pompey's army just weeks after narrowly avoiding total defeat himself

Caesar's increasing power and, most importantly, his popularity in Rome, had become a troubling development to Pompey, who now came to consider him a threat. Following the death of Crassus in 53 BCE, the First Triumvirate had ceased to exist and tensions escalated between Caesar (heading the Populare faction) and Pompey (leading the Optimates).

In 49 BCE, Caesar crossed the Rubicon River at the head of Legio XIII, breaking the law which stated that a Roman general could not approach Rome with an army. Support for Caesar quickly became apparent and Pompey was forced into a humiliating withdrawal. Although he had seven legions of loyal troops in Hispania, he instead went eastwards, to Greece, allowing Caesar to take on and defeat his loyal legions before moving to confront Pompey himself. Moreover, many of Pompey's men joined Caesar's army, as he showed mercy to all who lay down their arms, even their commanders.

The following year, having been re-elected as consul, Caesar took 12 legions to hunt down Pompey. At Dyrrhachium, Pompey inflicted a rare defeat on Caesar, but failed to follow up and turn it into a rout. 'Today, victory would have been with the enemy,' Caesar commented, 'if they had had a victor in command.' The stay of execution allowed Caesar to recover and turn the tables at the Battle of Pharsalus, a month later.

In the Greek state of Thessaly, the two armies drew up in opposing lines, Pompey having a clear numerical advantage, but with a force made up of many nationalities. Concern over possible disorganisation in his army may have led to him standing firm, thus yielding the initiative, while Caesar's smaller force advanced. After fierce fighting, Pompey's first line cracked, and a complete rout quickly followed. Stunned by his defeat, Pompey apparently retired to his tent in a daze. His casualties are estimated at a disastrous 10,000-20,000 men; Caesar's a mere 2,000.

5. Egypt, 47 BCE

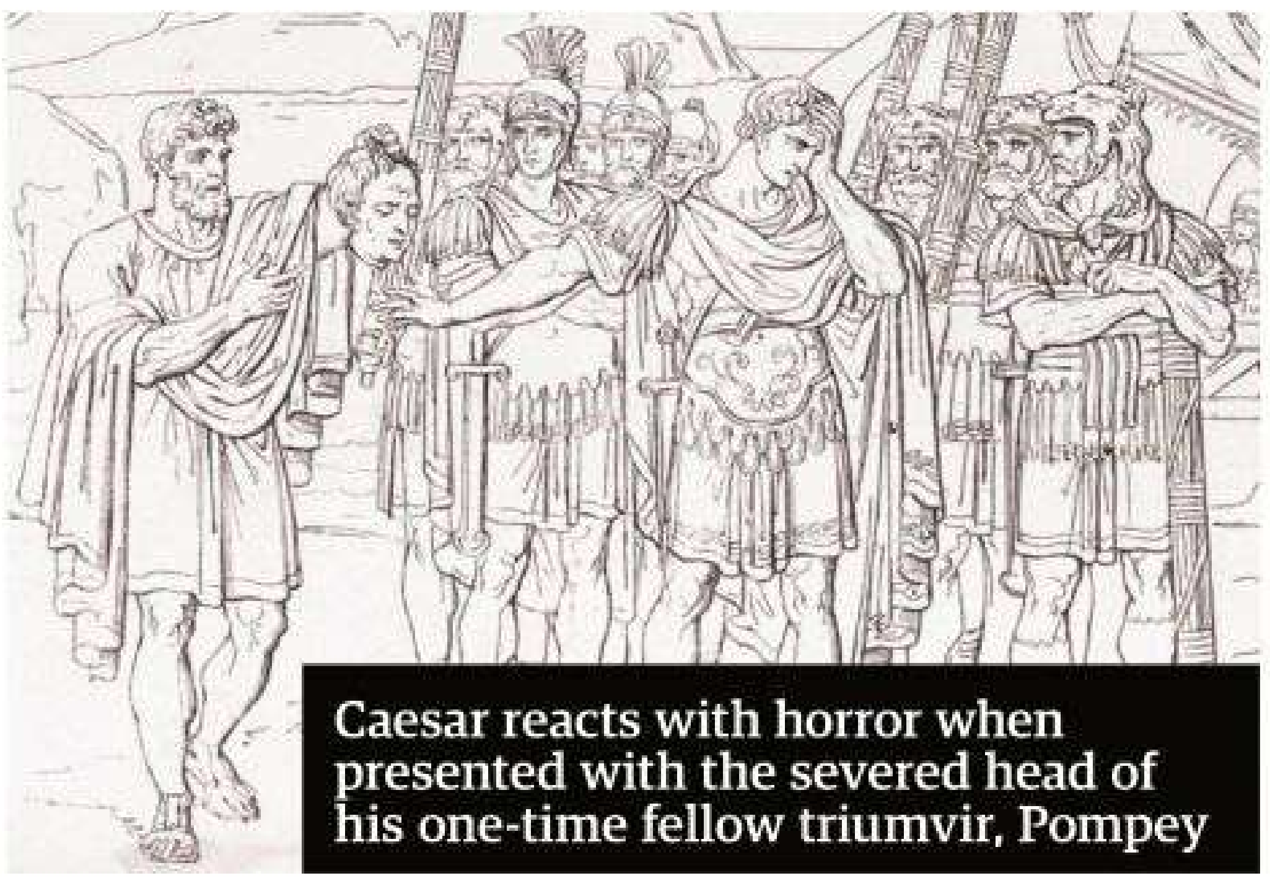
Even a love affair with Cleopatra could not totally distract Caesar from his militaristic preoccupations

After fleeing the battlefield at Pharsalus, Pompey found himself in Egypt, with Caesar in hot pursuit at the head of Legio VI. It was Pompey's misfortune to run straight into another civil war, between Cleopatra VII and her brother, Pharaoh Ptolemy XIII. With Ptolemy desperate to avoid displeasing Rome, he had Pompey executed as soon as he arrived.

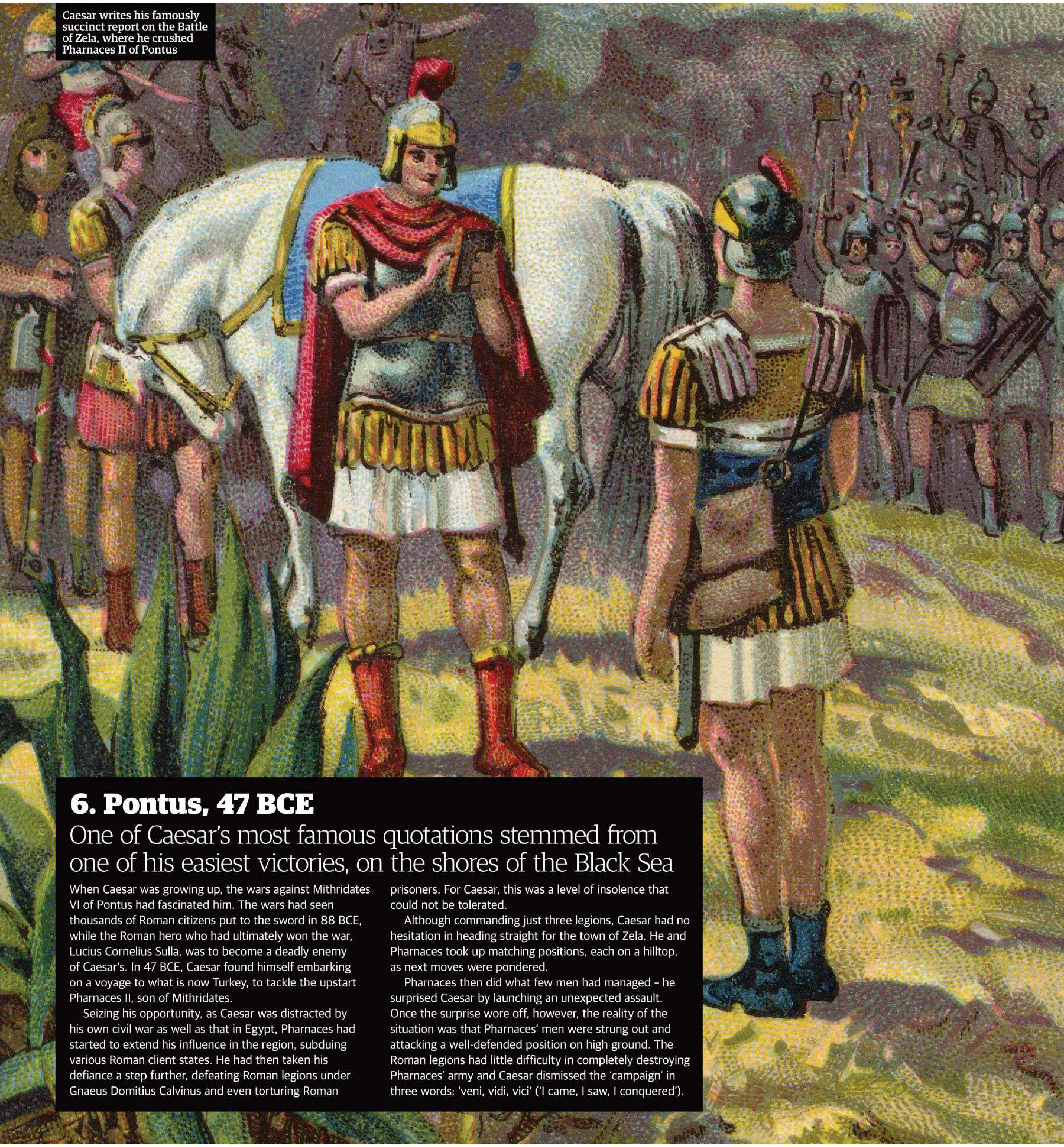
Caesar was appalled at the news when he arrived, but soon became distracted by the legendary beauty of Cleopatra. He supported her claim to the throne, but was unable to take an active role due to having only a single legion with him. With skirmishing taking place between his men and those of the Egyptian Army, Caesar took the drastic decision to burn his own fleet rather than risk it falling into Ptolemy's hands. The fire, however, spread to the Library of Alexandria, wiping out a good portion of the world's accumulated knowledge in the process.

The arrival of reinforcements turned the tables. A legion made up of soldiers who had fought alongside Pompey (Legio XXXVII), along with other units, allowed Caesar to go on the offensive. The Egyptian army, under Achillas and including many Romans in its number, was swept aside as Caesar captured Alexandria. Achillas was executed, Ptolemy drowned trying to escape and Cleopatra was firmly placed on the throne.

Caesar had been brought to Egypt in pursuit of Pompey, but he now stayed for Cleopatra and the couple soon had a son, who would one day rule Egypt as Ptolemy XV Caesar.



Caesar reacts with horror when presented with the severed head of his one-time fellow triumvir, Pompey



Caesar writes his famously succinct report on the Battle of Zela, where he crushed Pharnaces II of Pontus

6. Pontus, 47 BCE

One of Caesar's most famous quotations stemmed from one of his easiest victories, on the shores of the Black Sea

When Caesar was growing up, the wars against Mithridates VI of Pontus had fascinated him. The wars had seen thousands of Roman citizens put to the sword in 88 BCE, while the Roman hero who had ultimately won the war, Lucius Cornelius Sulla, was to become a deadly enemy of Caesar's. In 47 BCE, Caesar found himself embarking on a voyage to what is now Turkey, to tackle the upstart Pharnaces II, son of Mithridates.

Seizing his opportunity, as Caesar was distracted by his own civil war as well as that in Egypt, Pharnaces had started to extend his influence in the region, subduing various Roman client states. He had then taken his defiance a step further, defeating Roman legions under Gnaeus Domitius Calvinus and even torturing Roman prisoners. For Caesar, this was a level of insolence that could not be tolerated.

Although commanding just three legions, Caesar had no hesitation in heading straight for the town of Zela. He and Pharnaces took up matching positions, each on a hilltop, as next moves were pondered.

Pharnaces then did what few men had managed – he surprised Caesar by launching an unexpected assault. Once the surprise wore off, however, the reality of the situation was that Pharnaces' men were strung out and attacking a well-defended position on high ground. The Roman legions had little difficulty in completely destroying Pharnaces' army and Caesar dismissed the 'campaign' in three words: 'veni, vidi, vici' ('I came, I saw, I conquered').

7. Thapsus, 46 BCE

Elements loyal to Pompey gathered in North Africa, where they became Caesar's next target as the Civil War rumbled on

The site of the city of Carthage, destroyed by the Romans a century earlier during the Punic Wars, had become the focal point for continued resistance to Caesar. The Optimates faction (led by Metellus Scipio, a descendent of the legendary Scipio Africanus, the great Roman hero of the Second Punic War) waited as Caesar crossed to North Africa with six legions.

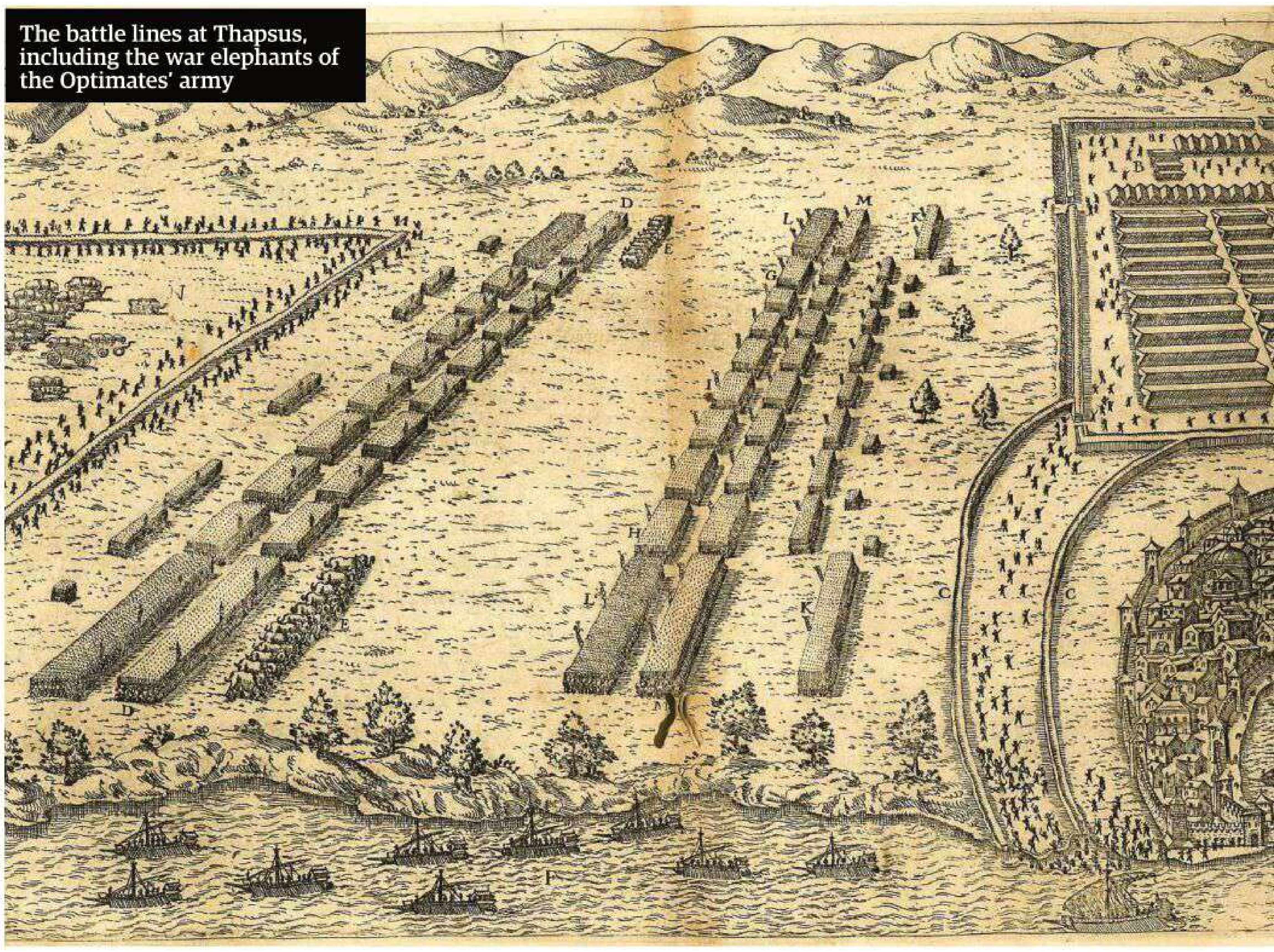
Early skirmishes went badly for Caesar, who called for extra legions to reinforce his army. By April of 46 BCE the stage was set for the major confrontation at the city of Thapsus, in modern Tunisia.

Caesar first drew Scipio into battle by besieging the strategic city, forcing the Optimates to offer battle on ground disadvantageous to them. Still, the Optimates army was formidable, having a sizeable numerical advantage and also possessing around 60 war elephants.

Caesar decided that an aggressive assault was his best route to victory, and he launched an attack while Scipio's men were preparing defensive positions. The historian Plutarch wrote, 'Caesar made his way with inconceivable speed,' and the Optimates were thrown into confusion. Critically, the war elephants were driven into a frenzy by archers and slingers and ran amok, causing chaos in the ranks of the Optimates.

The choice of battlefield played right into Caesar's hands, bottling Scipio's army up, meaning he could not use his superior numbers to best effect and leaving his men unable to rally.

As the battle raged, Caesar fell victim to one of his periodic bouts of epilepsy (his 'usual sickness' in the words of Plutarch), but by then the course of the battle was already set. After the victory, in an unusual show of anger, Caesar had many of the Optimates legionaries executed (casualties amounted to around 10,000, while Caesar lost only 1,000 men). Scipio himself committed suicide when an escape attempt failed, an ignominious end for a man who carried one of the great Roman names.


The battle lines at Thapsus, including the war elephants of the Optimates' army

> "The historian Plutarch wrote, 'Caesar made his way with inconceivable speed,' and the Optimates were thrown into confusion"

8. Hispania, 45 BCE

Caesar's military career ended where it had begun, in Hispania, against the last remnants of the Optimates faction

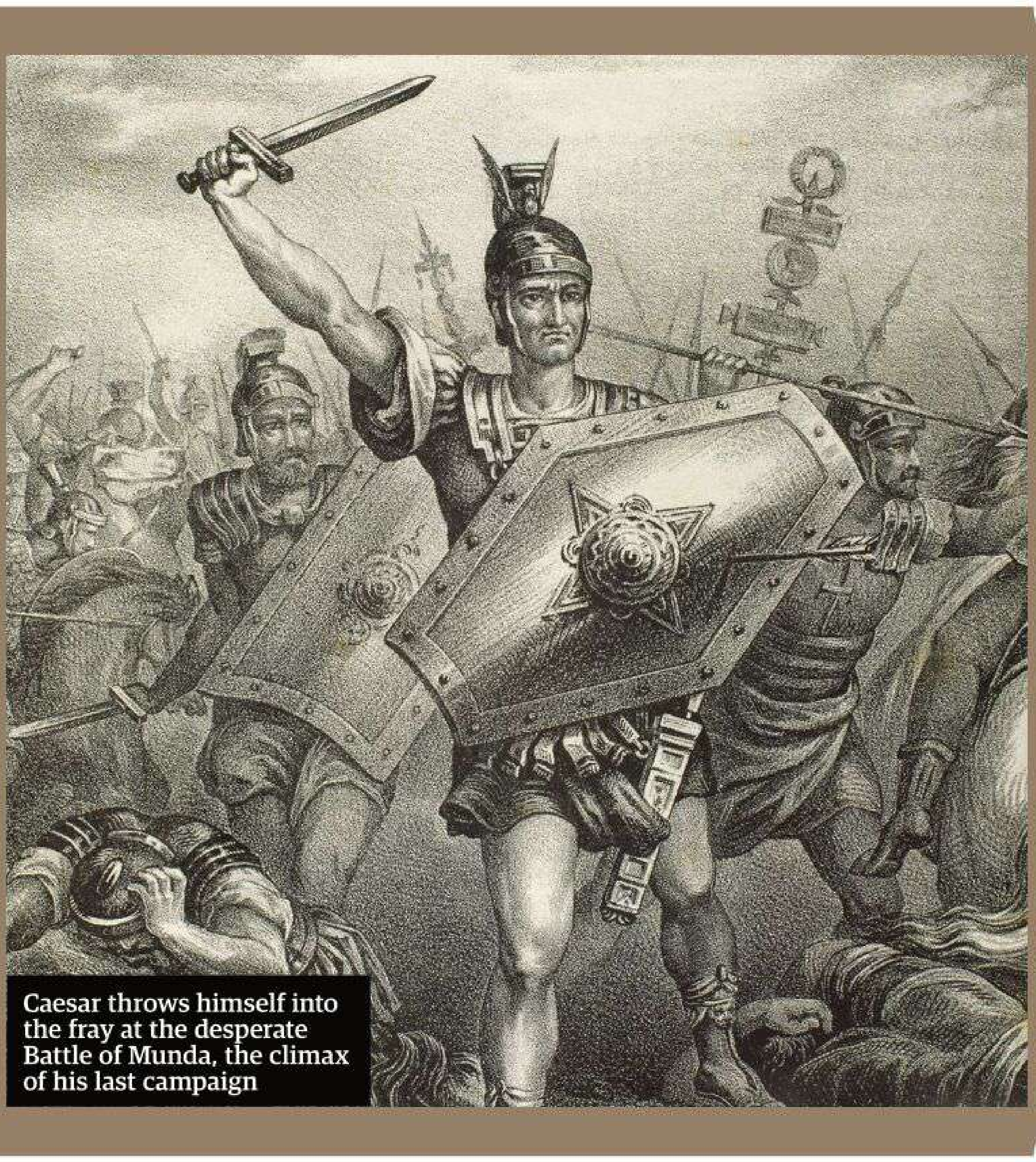
The legendary military achievements of Caesar had been celebrated with four consecutive 'triumphs', marking his successes in Gaul, Egypt, Pontus and North Africa. (Vercingetorix had been paraded once more during the Gaul triumph, before being executed.)

But still the Civil War refused to die as a massive army, comprising 13 legions plus auxiliaries, massed in Hispania. Gnaeus Pompeius, son of Pompey himself, commanded the last threat to Caesar's power. Having already been voted Dictator of Rome, for an unprecedented ten-year duration, Caesar was still determined to crush this last resistance. At the head of eight legions he marched westward to the land where his career as a military commander had begun.

Pompeius handled his campaign skilfully, refusing to be drawn into a major battle and instead sapping Caesar's strength in a series of smaller actions. The plan was working, but the Optimates' legionaries became disenchanted with this style of warfare, forcing Pompeius' hand. On 17 March, 45 BCE, he offered battle at Munda.

It was one of the largest battles of Caesar's career, with sources claiming up to 120,000 men in total. Pompeius' men, aware of the lack of mercy shown to the defeated legions at Thapsus, fought hard and both commanding generals threw themselves into the fray.

At the head of his beloved Legio X, Caesar achieved a breakthrough on the right, causing a ripple effect on the rest of the battlefield and forcing the Optimates back into the city of Munda. There was no doubt as to the outcome of the siege; Caesar had his final victory, inflicting casualties of around 30,000 at a cost of just 7,000.


Caesar throws himself into the fray at the desperate Battle of Munda, the climax of his last campaign

Caesar's invasion of Britain

He was Rome's greatest ever military commander, but there was one remote corner of Europe that he'd never manage to conquer

In the 1st century BCE, Britain was an island on the edge of the so-called civilised world. A dark, uncharted place whose inhabitants were said to be half-beast, blue-painted savages who practised human sacrifice and wore the heads of their slaughtered enemies upon their belts. To most Romans, Britain was a nightmarish netherworld best left in the shadows.

But Julius Caesar wasn't like most Romans. In August 55 BCE, having fought his way across present-day France conquering much of what was then called Gaul, Rome's rising superstar stood on the shore at Boulogne and stared across the Channel. On a clear day, it's just possible to see the coast of Kent from there. For Caesar, the great gambler, the unknown land on the horizon was a tantalising prospect. Yes, landing there would be risky, dangerous even. And with his intelligence officers struggling to locate a single person who could reveal what monsters might be found there, he'd be going in blind. But he was Julius Caesar, and he was destined for greatness. The gods themselves had told him as much.

> Archaeologists have found a site at Pegwell Bay, Kent, which is believed to have been where Caesar based his troops after landing in Britain

The official argument Caesar gave for the mission he then began to plot was preventing any potential resupply from Britannia to his recently defeated opponents in Gaul. But the real reason was much simpler: it was because he was greedy. Eager not just for plunder, but for adventure, knowledge, fame and, ultimately, power.

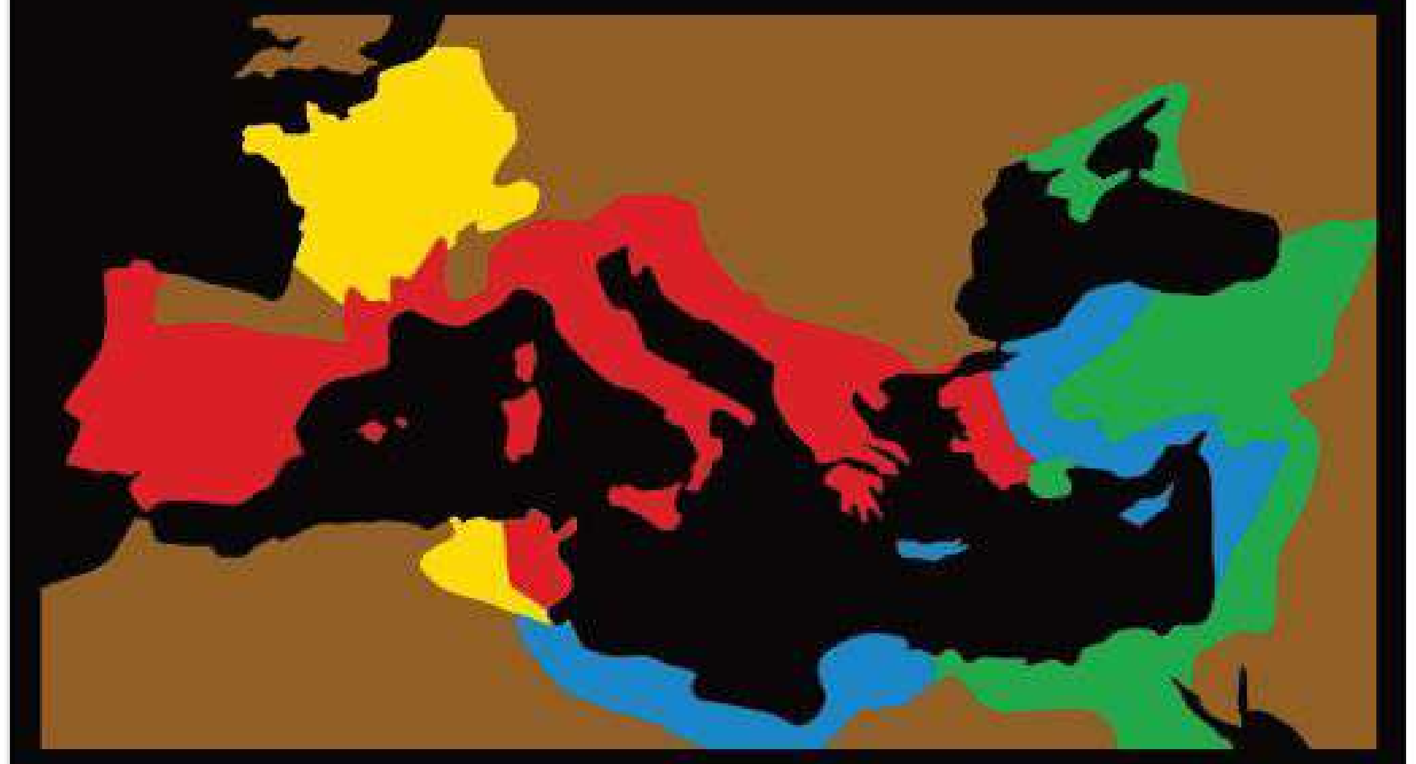
On the morning of 23 August, he loaded 12,000 troops onto 98 galleys and set sail for the smudge on the horizon across the English Channel. As he and his army drew closer, that smudge became ever brighter, rising out of the sea until the men from the Mediterranean were staring at an impenetrable barrier – brilliant white cliffs, 100 metres high.

Caesar ordered his armada to drop anchor in the Dover Straits and await the ships carrying his waylaid cavalry. His troops lounged on deck for hours until somebody shouted – movement had been spotted on land. His men then all stood and watched aghast as the cliff tops hovering above them began to fill with thousands of blue-painted warriors, their sharp spear points gleaming in the brilliant sunshine.

The first invasion

Caesar found that a raid of Britain meant struggling not only against the island's inhabitants, but also its weather

Roman conquests



🟥 Roman Republic 63 BCE 🟨 Caesar's conquests 44 BCE 🟦 Pompey's Conquests 58 BCE 🟩 Vassal States

On 26 August 55 BCE, Caesar gave the order for Roman troops to land on British soil for the first time. Having waited for hours near Dover for his cavalry to arrive, he decided to go ashore without them. Ordering his fleet north east, he found a suitable beach six miles away, at Deal. The entire time he was watched from land by the army the Britons had sent to meet him, following him to the shingle shoreline he now anchored his galleys off.

Caesar could now see his new enemy up close. Although often mistakenly described as Celtic, these Ancient Britons weren't related to the Indo-European tribes like the Gauls. These were an indigenous people, genetically connected to the Basques of northern Spain. Standing a head taller than the Romans, the warriors wore very little, instead adorning their bodies with blue war paint possibly made from the plant woad, but much more likely oxidised copper. Some were on horseback, others in nimble chariots, the rest on foot. All, though, had come to fight.

As the Romans tried to disembark, the tribesmen made good use of the stones on Deal's beach. The slingshot was their primary hunting weapon, and as Caesar's legionaries struggled over the sides of their galleys, stone missiles rained down on them.

Caesar ordered a barrage in response. Archers drove the defending slingers backwards and the way to shore was clear, but still his troops faltered, spooked by the warriors who waited on land. But then a standard bearer jumped into the water shouting: "Leap down men, unless you want to abandon the eagle to the enemy." To a Roman soldier, his legion's standard was a symbol of martial pride, and its loss a profound disgrace. So, the legionaries followed him. They were set upon as soon as they were ashore with clubs, spears and swords. Savage hand-to-hand fighting ensued before the battered Romans could get into formation and repel the wild attacks.

With a beachhead established, Caesar set up camp. Still without cavalry, his options were limited. His 500 mounted troops should have set sail that morning but had been penned in by the tides. It would be four days before they'd attempt the crossing, but a sudden violent squall forced them back to Gaul, destroying many of the ships at Deal in the process. Caesar was stranded. Lacking supplies to repair their ships, the Romans ventured inland to scavenge. It was deadly work. The men were ambushed constantly by an enemy that struck as suddenly as it vanished.

Three weeks of relentless rain followed, grinding down the spirits of the Mediterranean invaders as they desperately patched up their ships. When the weather lifted, a huge force descended on them. "A battle followed," Caesar wrote, "and the enemy, unable to stand long against the onset of our troops, turned and fled." The Britons were not a literate people and their version of events has long since faded. Whether Caesar's account is accurate or propaganda is unclear. However, come the next morning, his entire army was back in Gaul.

The Ancient Britons

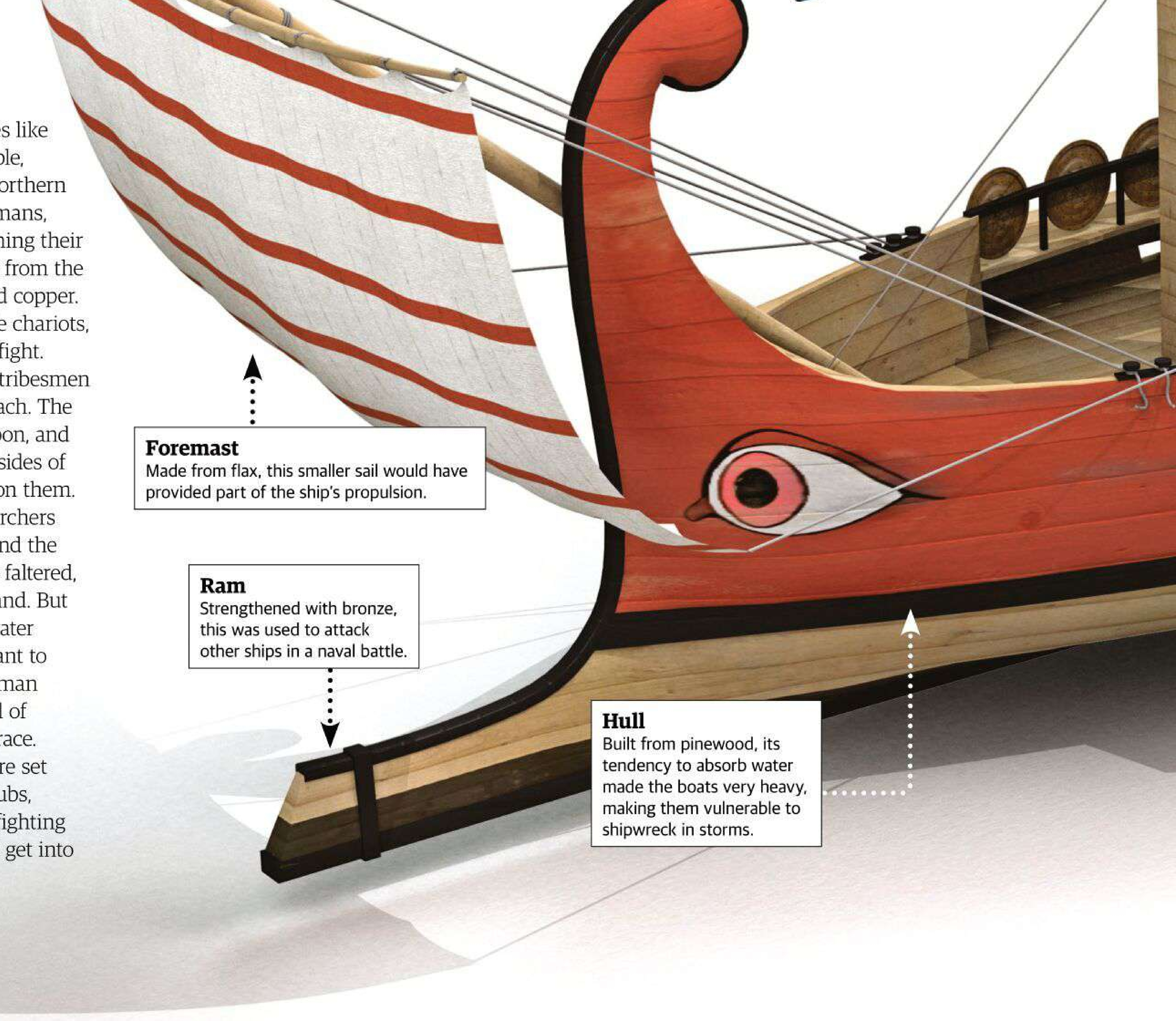
The brutish, half-naked people Caesar met appeared to be savages, but their warrior society was surprisingly sophisticated

The term "Celtic" was first used to describe pre-Roman Britain in the 18th century, and has been used, erroneously, in popular culture ever since. The Iron-Age inhabitants of the British Isles weren't Celtic in origin at all, but indigenous – the Celts being the so-called barbarian tribes that dominated much of mainland Europe. They also weren't, despite the horror stories that circulated about them in Rome, uncivilised savages.

Ancient Britain was a fertile land rich in minerals, and mining and farming were carving up the countryside in a way we would recognise today. Great hill forts peppered the landscape, watching over the neatly ploughed fields. Behind their terraced stockades, embryonic towns complete with streets, places of worship, forges and workshops were mushrooming. From the latter came spectacular metalwork, not just swords and spears, but intricately adorned jewellery, hunting horns and mirrors.

The ancient Britons also weren't, in any modern sense of the word, a nation. Instead, the island was inhabited by approximately 27 different and often-warring tribal groups, ranging from the Caledones in the Scottish highlands to the Cantiaci in Kent, who Caesar had encountered, with each tribe led by a warrior king or queen.

Made in Middlesex in the 1st century BCE, this bronze ornament depicts a wild boar, an animal most Ancient Britons would have feasted on



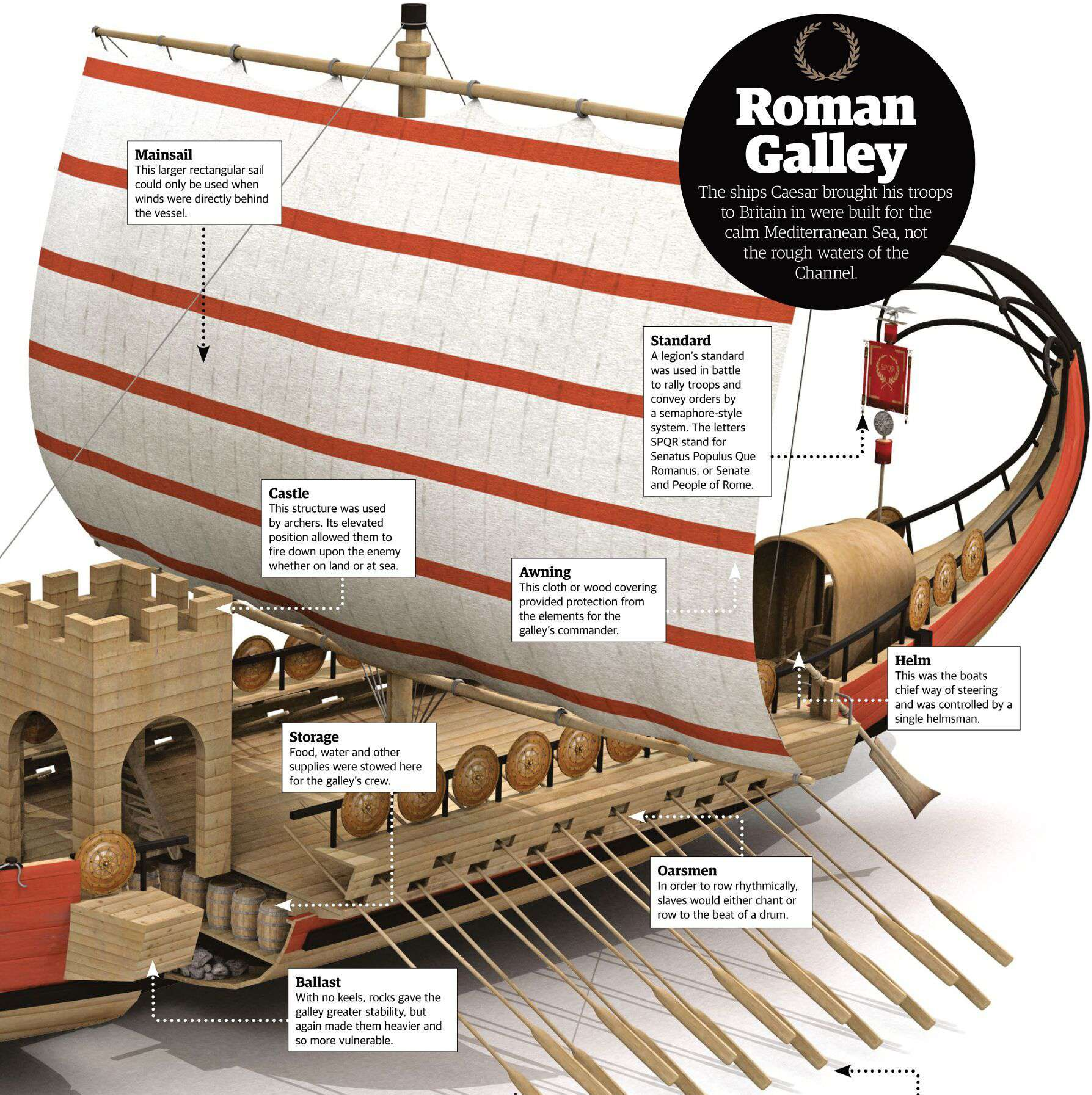
Foremast
Made from flax, this smaller sail would have provided part of the ship's propulsion.

Ram
Strengthened with bronze, this was used to attack other ships in a naval battle.

Hull
Built from pinewood, its tendency to absorb water made the boats very heavy, making them vulnerable to shipwreck in storms.

Roman Galley

The ships Caesar brought his troops to Britain in were built for the calm Mediterranean Sea, not the rough waters of the Channel.



Mainsail
This larger rectangular sail could only be used when winds were directly behind the vessel.

Standard
A legion's standard was used in battle to rally troops and convey orders by a semaphore-style system. The letters SPQR stand for Senatus Populus Que Romanus, or Senate and People of Rome.

Castle
This structure was used by archers. Its elevated position allowed them to fire down upon the enemy whether on land or at sea.

Awning
This cloth or wood covering provided protection from the elements for the galley's commander.

Helm
This was the boats chief way of steering and was controlled by a single helmsman.

Storage
Food, water and other supplies were stowed here for the galley's crew.

Oarsmen
In order to row rhythmically, slaves would either chant or row to the beat of a drum.

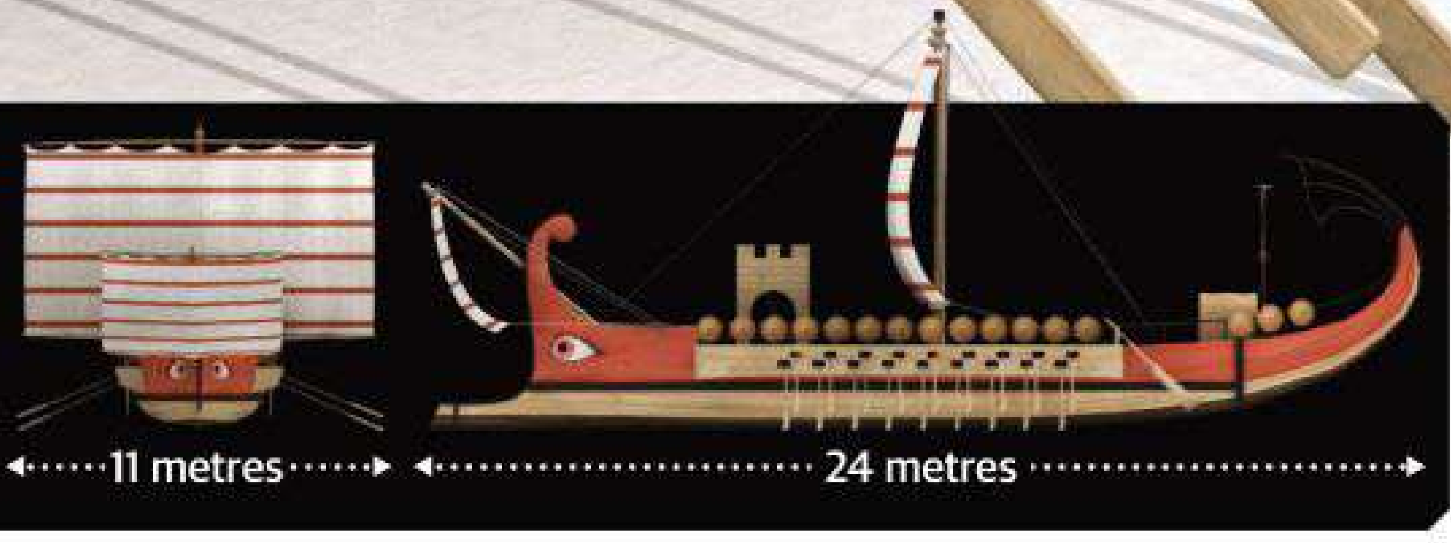
Ballast
With no keels, rocks gave the galley greater stability, but again made them heavier and so more vulnerable.

Oars
Each oar was approximately four metres long and attached to a fixed vertical peg via a leather loop.

Fact Sheet: Bireme

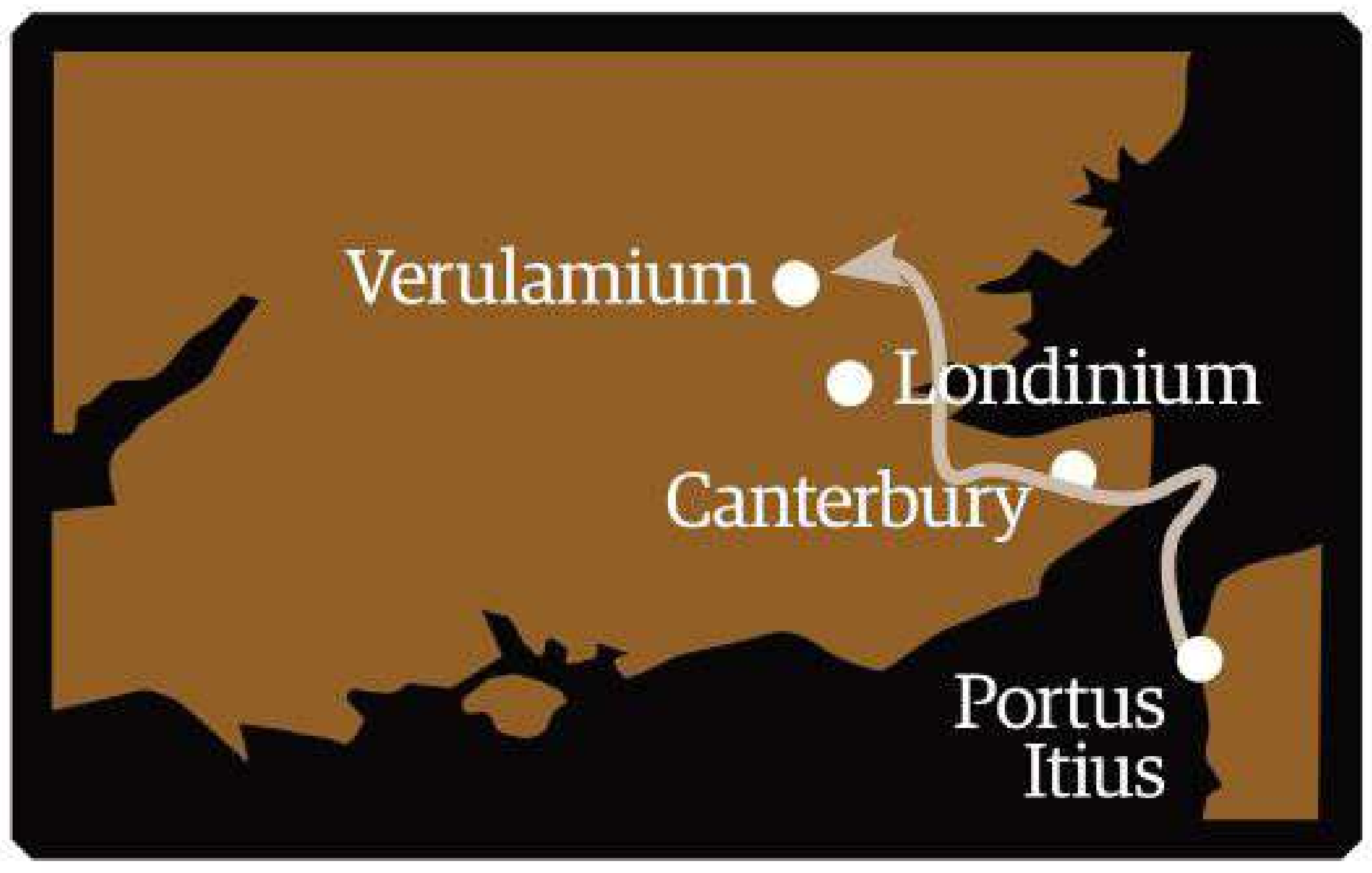
Biremes such as this one were named for the two decks of oars on either side

Crew Up to 130, including oarsmen, sailors and marines.



The second invasion

Caesar's first trip to Britain had been costly, but he now knew that he wanted to conquer the land, for Rome and himself



Over the winter of 55-54 BCE, Caesar brooded over his expedition to Britain. Sure, it had done his celebrity status no harm - in fact in Rome news of his exploits sparked a 20-day party - but he was not a man used to failure. He resolved to return, and this time to conquer.

He ordered the construction of a new invasion force with the galleys built to a different spec. "Made a little shallower than those that are habitually used in the Mediterranean," as explained in his campaign diary, "to enable them to be hauled up on shore." He also put together a far bigger army. When he landed near Deal on 7 July 54 BCE, his flotilla of 800 ships disgorged more than 25,000 legionaries, 2,000 cavalry and a huge baggage train to supply them. The force was so great that the Britons onshore made no attempt to confront them, instead retreating to higher ground.

Caesar chased them all the way to the Stour River, 12 miles from the coast, and at dawn the following day his troops made their first contact with them. After a brief skirmish near present-day Canterbury, the Britons fled to a nearby hill fort, which the Romans now attacked.

The fort was ringed by a defensive ditch, which the legionaries overcame using the "tortoise" formation. By creating an all-encompassing shield wall, they could work in relative safety, building a ramp across the ditch. The fort's walls were then breached and the stronghold taken.

Before Caesar could capitalise on this rapid progress, he'd again end up cursing the British weather. Another freak summer storm clattered its way through the Channel, and when the main body of his troops returned, they found most of their ships damaged, with 40 destroyed completely.

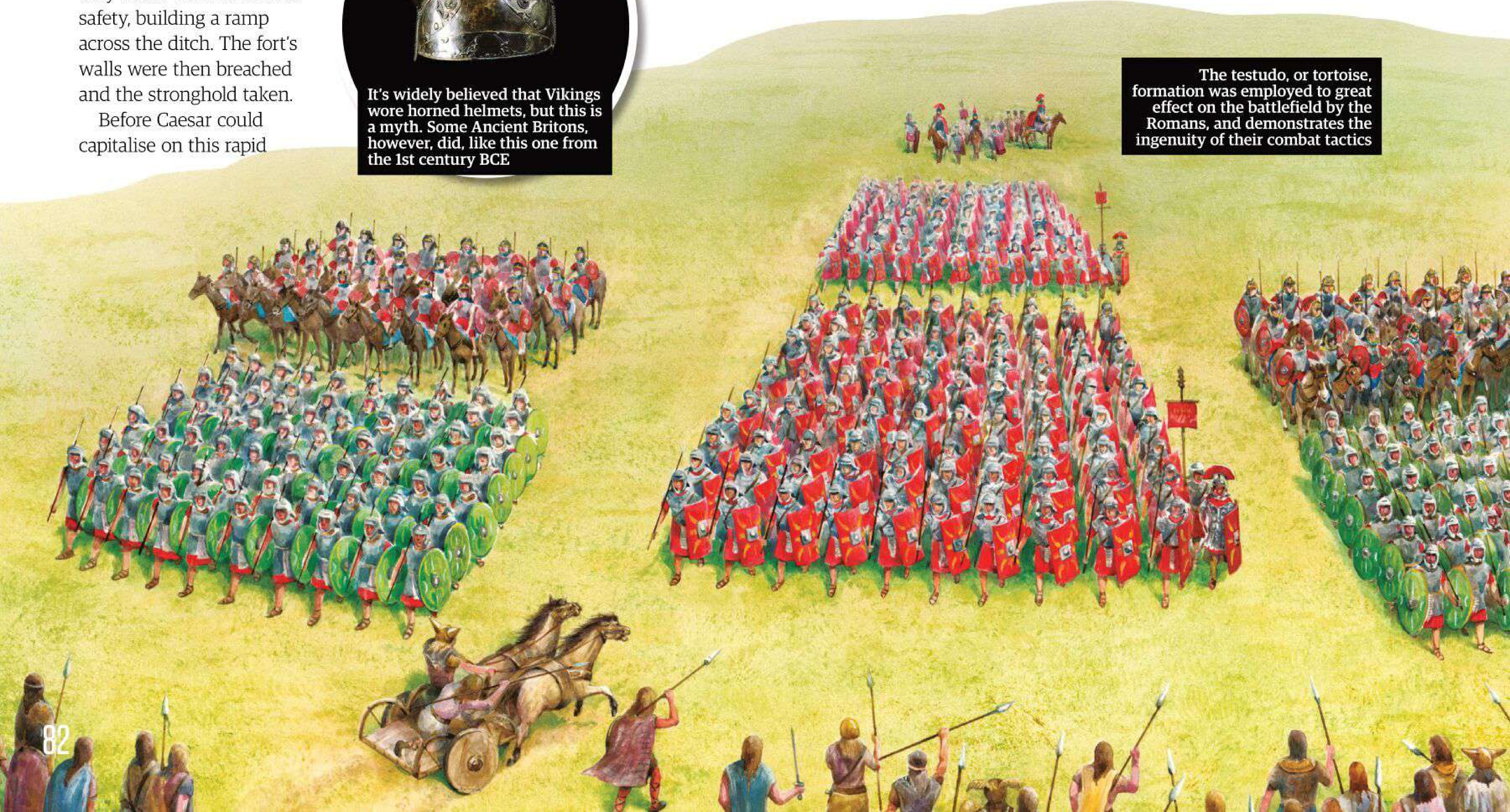
Caesar ordered the remaining boats to be brought ashore. A huge fort was then constructed around them so that they could be repaired in safety. It was a massive undertaking, but it took Caesar's men just ten days to complete. In that time, the British tribes did something they'd never done before - they united against a common enemy. They chose as their leader Cassivellaunus, who ruled the Catuvellauni tribe north of the Thames. Having recently defeated the Trinovante tribe, Cassivellaunus was the best the Britons had. His army met Caesar's head on at the Stour River.

Here, the Romans witnessed first hand one of the British warriors' unique tactics. Using lightweight chariots pulled by two fast ponies, a driver would transport a soldier into battle at high speed. From the back of the chariot he would launch javelins into the Roman ranks, before dismounting to fight at close quarters with a sword or spear. If he then tired or found himself becoming overwhelmed, he could return to the chariot and be sped away to safety. A modern army uses armoured personnel carriers in much the same way, and it was further proof to the Romans that these Britons were more than just mere savages.

The battle was bitter, but as good as Cassivellaunus was, he was no match for Rome's greatest tactician or the world's finest war machine. His forces were eventually overwhelmed and forced to retreat. As he was chased back, he switched to guerrilla tactics, destroying food sources and laying traps. His army of resistance, however, was crumbling from the inside. As the bodies mounted, tribe after tribe joined the Romans, and by the time Caesar crossed the Thames, he knew the location of Cassivellaunus's secret stronghold.

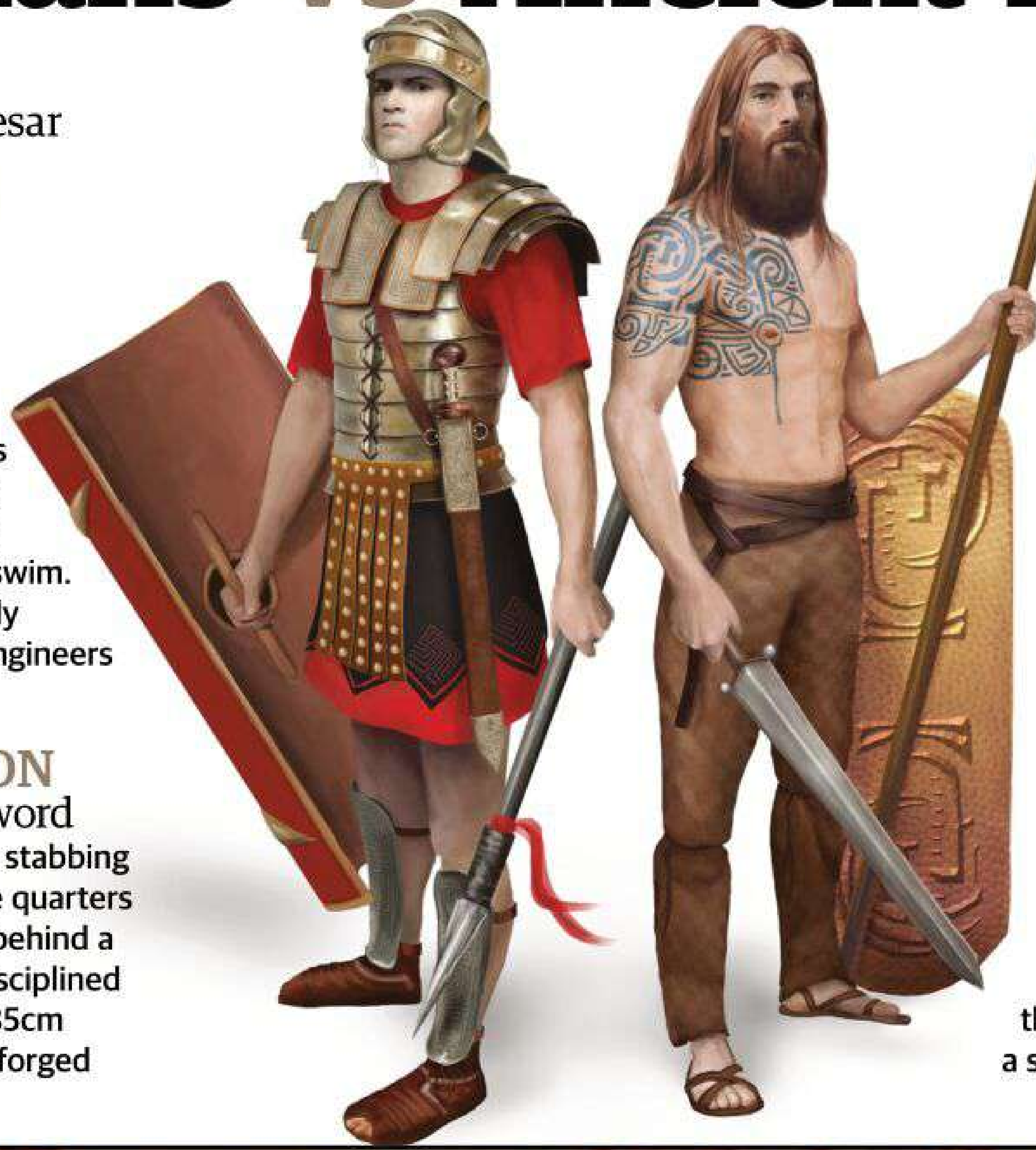
As Caesar prepared to lay siege to Cassivellaunus's fort at Verulamium, near present-day St Albans, the British warlord took one last gamble. He ordered an attack on the Romans' camp on the beach near Deal. It was an inspired but doomed move. When news of its failure reached Cassivellaunus, the canny warrior, by now out of options, offered up his surrender. Britannia, it seemed, was within Caesar's greedy grasp. The gods however, had other plans.

It's widely believed that Vikings wore horned helmets, but this is a myth. Some Ancient Britons, however, did, like this one from the 1st century BCE



The testudo, or tortoise, formation was employed to great effect on the battlefield by the Romans, and demonstrates the ingenuity of their combat tactics

Romans vs Ancient Britons



LEADER
Gaius Julius Caesar

STRENGTH
Over 27,000

KEY UNIT
Legionary

Well-trained and equipped legionaries had to be fit enough to march 20 miles a day, and be able to swim. They were also highly proficient combat engineers and boatmen.

KEY WEAPON
Gladius short sword

An ideal weapon for stabbing and slashing at close quarters while fighting from behind a shield within well-disciplined ranks. It measured 85cm (33in) long and was forged from steel.

LEADER
Cassivellaunus

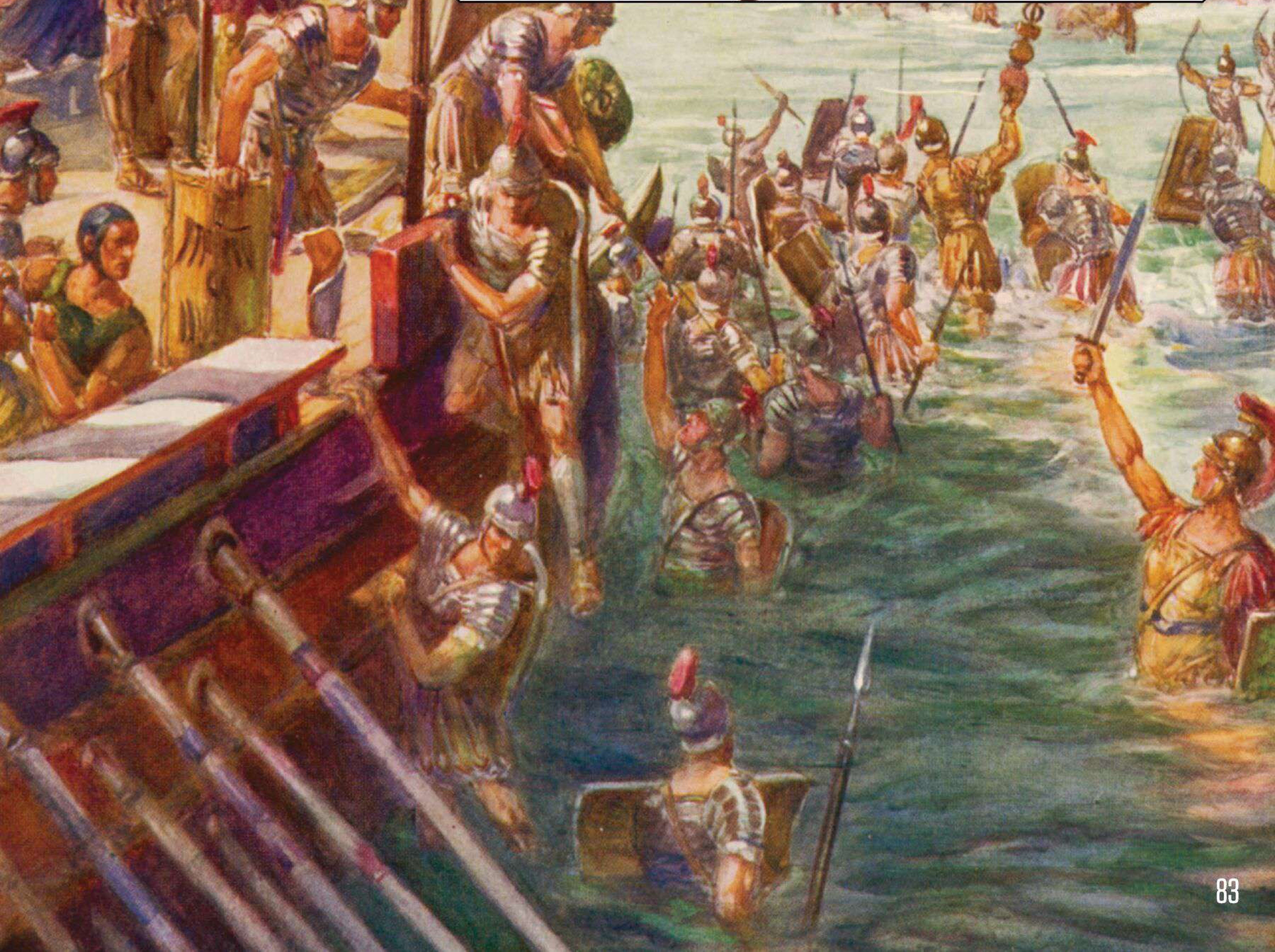
STRENGTH
Unknown but likely to be tens of thousands

KEY UNIT
Warrior

The only accounts of these fighters are Roman, which portray them as reckless savages. Their tactics and technology – their copper sulphate war paint, for example, had antiseptic qualities – suggest otherwise.

KEY WEAPON
Spear

Measuring 2.5m (8ft), these spears were designed to be used one handed, enabling the warrior to fight from behind a shield, typically using it to slash downwards from above.



Caesar's notebook

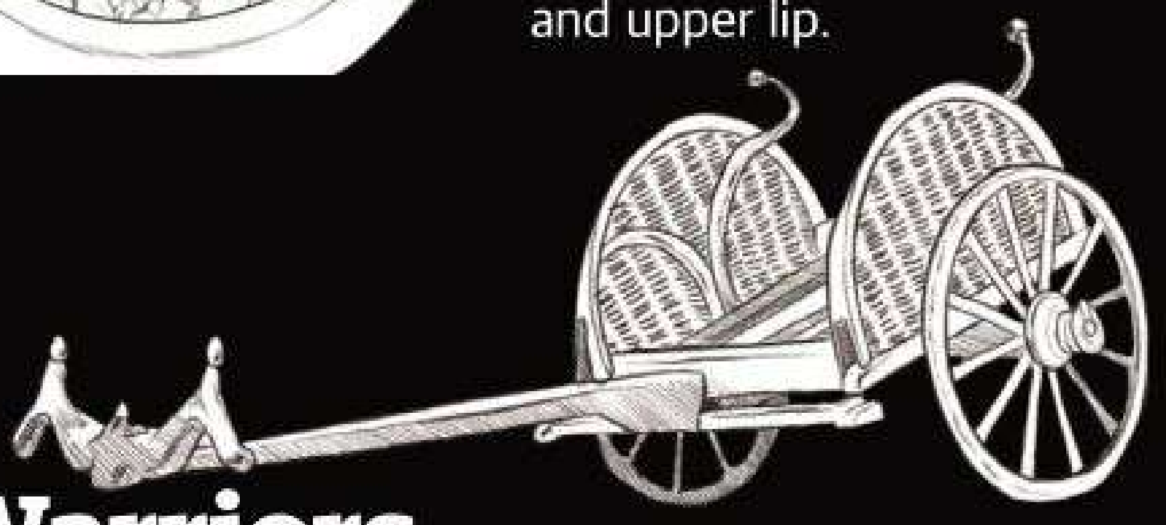
Caesar's book *The Gallic Wars* was written while he was literally making history. In it, he recorded, among other things, his impressions of British life

Geography

The island is triangular, and one of its sides is opposite to Gaul. This side extends 500 miles. Another side lies toward Spain and the west and is 700 miles. The third side is toward the north. This side is 800 miles in length. The island is about 2,000 miles in circumference.

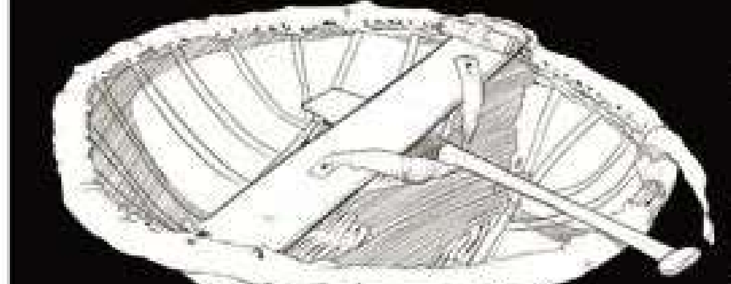
People

All the Britons dye themselves a bluish colour, and thereby have a more terrible appearance in a fight. They wear their hair long, and have every part of their body shaved except for their head and upper lip.



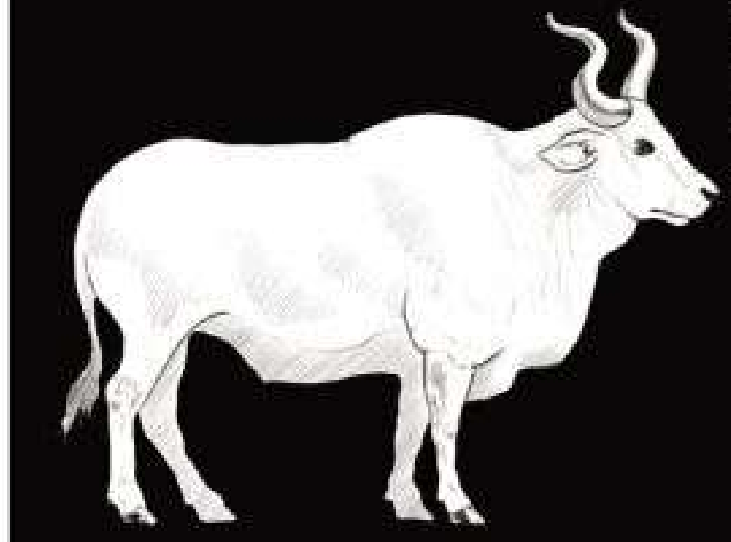
Warriors

Their mode of fighting with their chariots is this: firstly, they drive in all directions, throwing their weapons to break the ranks of the enemy, they then leap from their chariots and engage on foot. The charioteers in the meantime withdraw from battle so that if their masters are overpowered, they may have a ready retreat.



Technology

They have boats, the keels and ribs of which are made of light timber, then, the rest of the hull of the ships is wrought with wicker work, and covered over with hides.

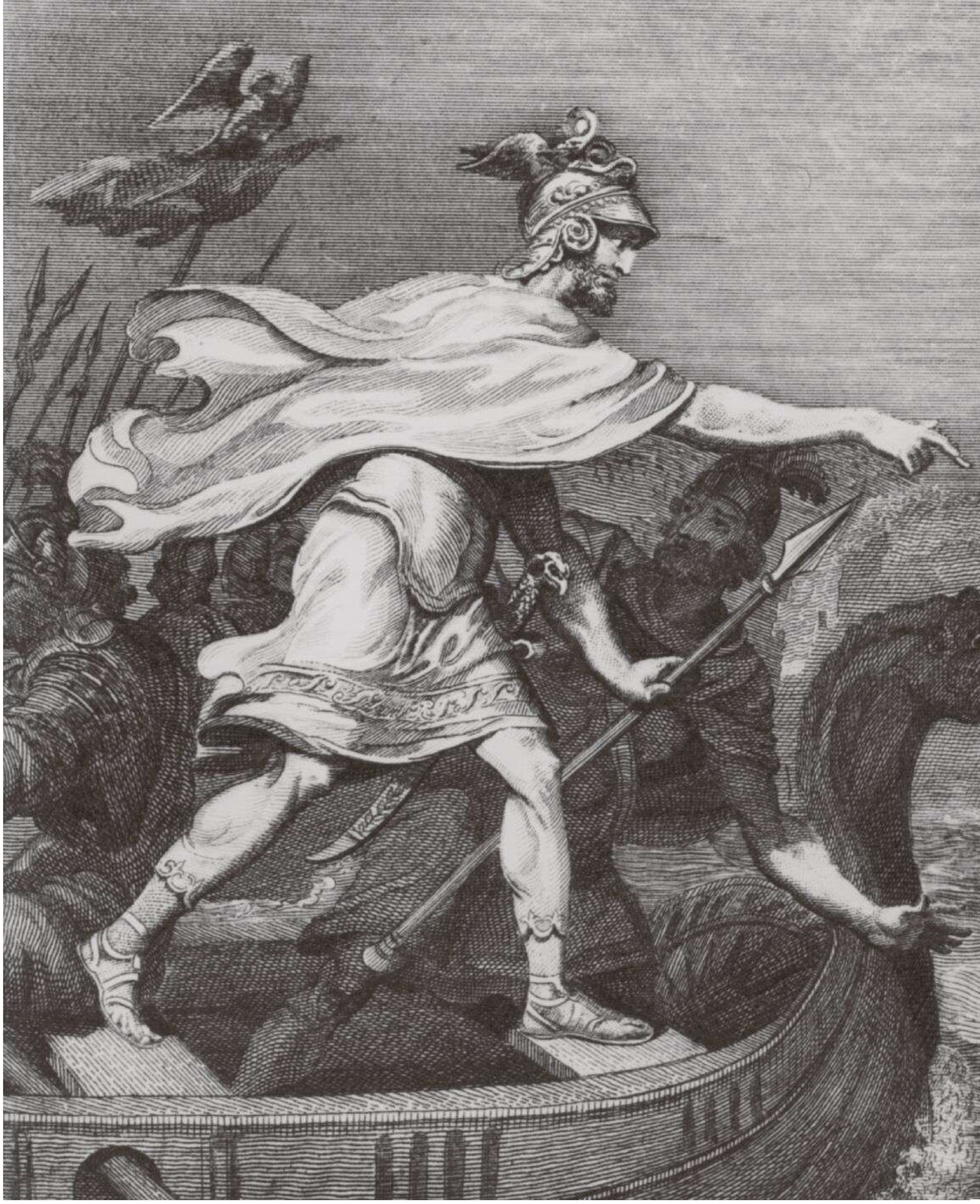


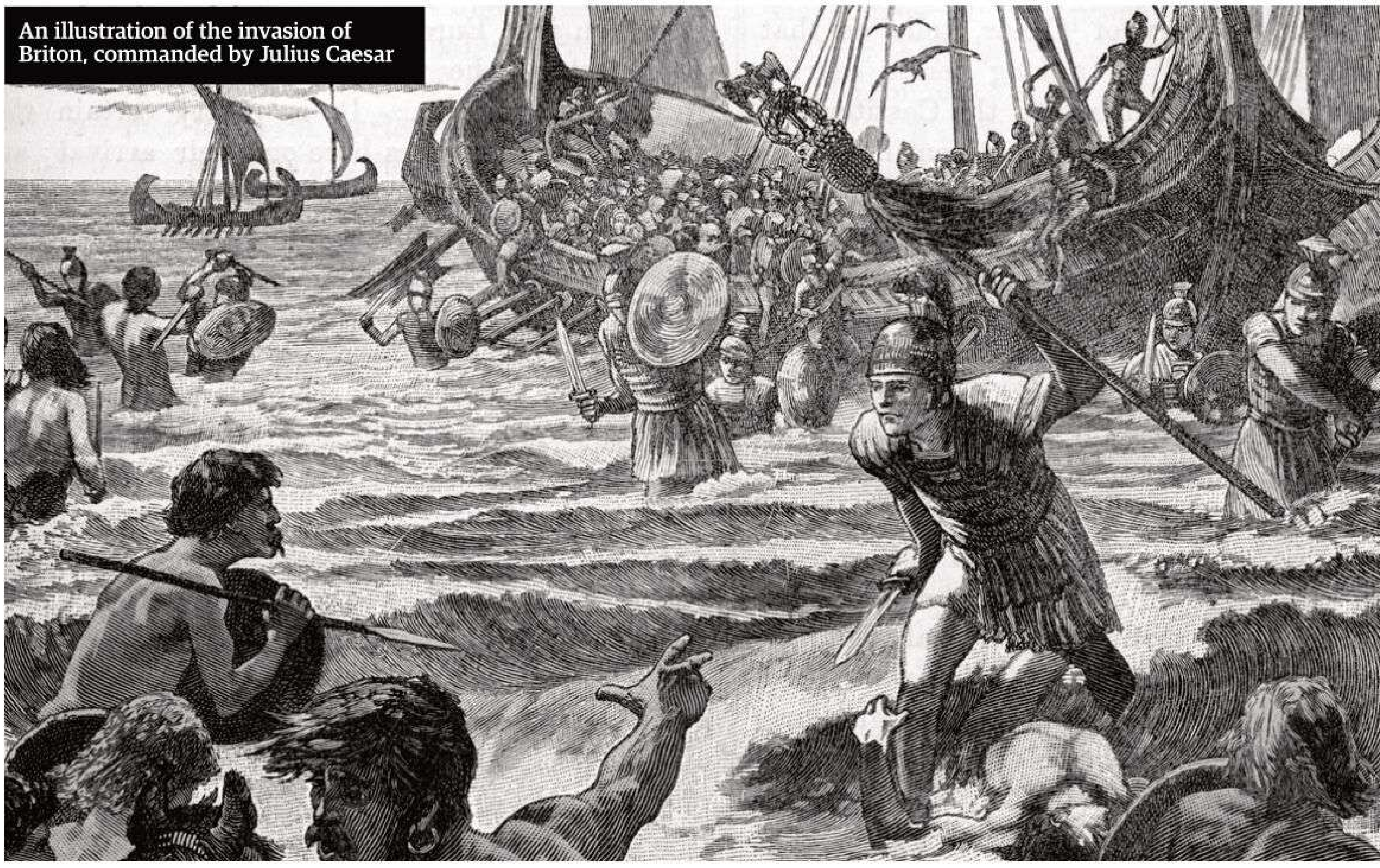
Resources

The number of cattle is great. They use either brass or iron rings, determined at a certain weight, as their money. Tin is produced in the midland regions; in the maritime, iron; but the quantity of it is small: they employ brass, which is imported.

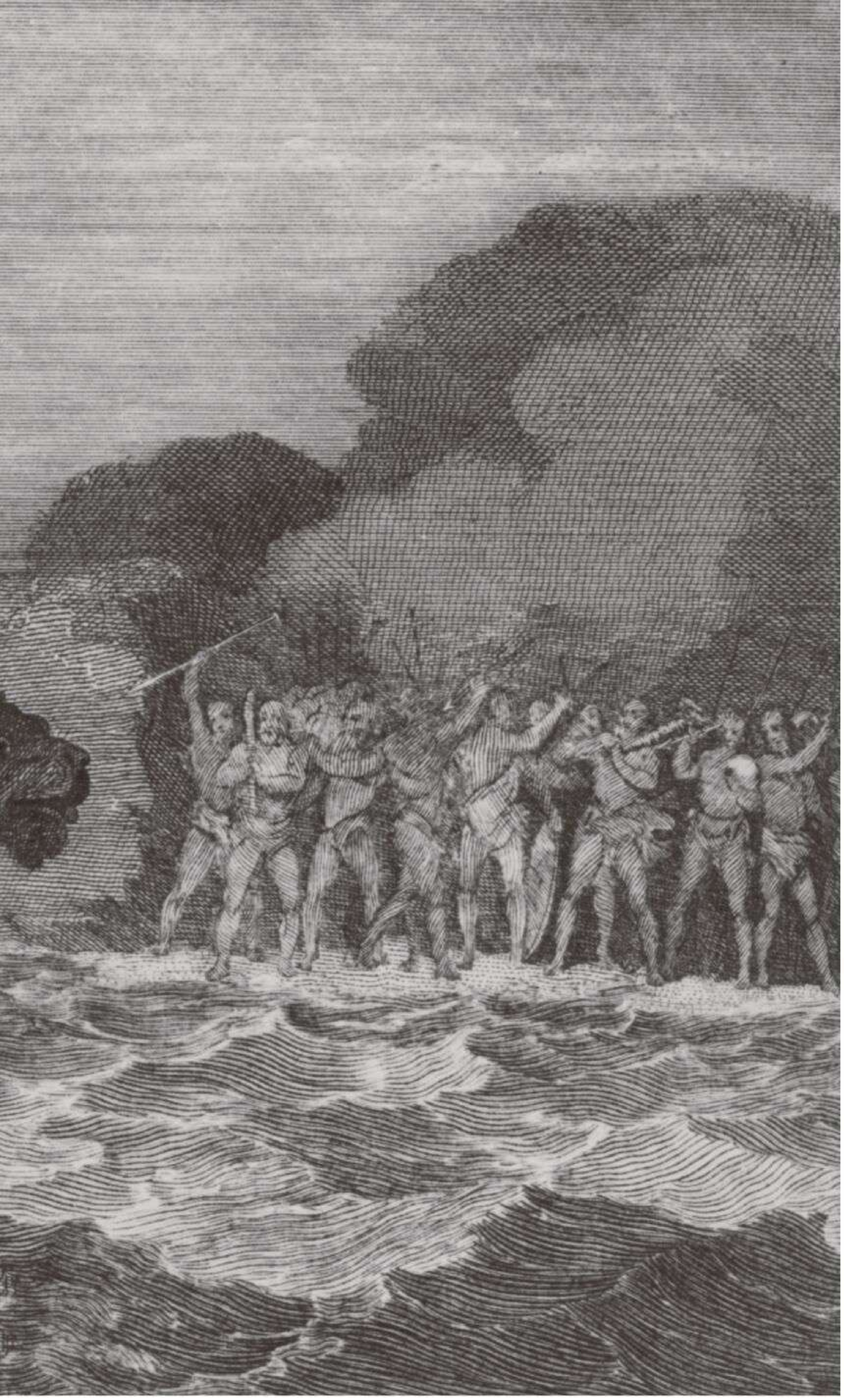
Religion

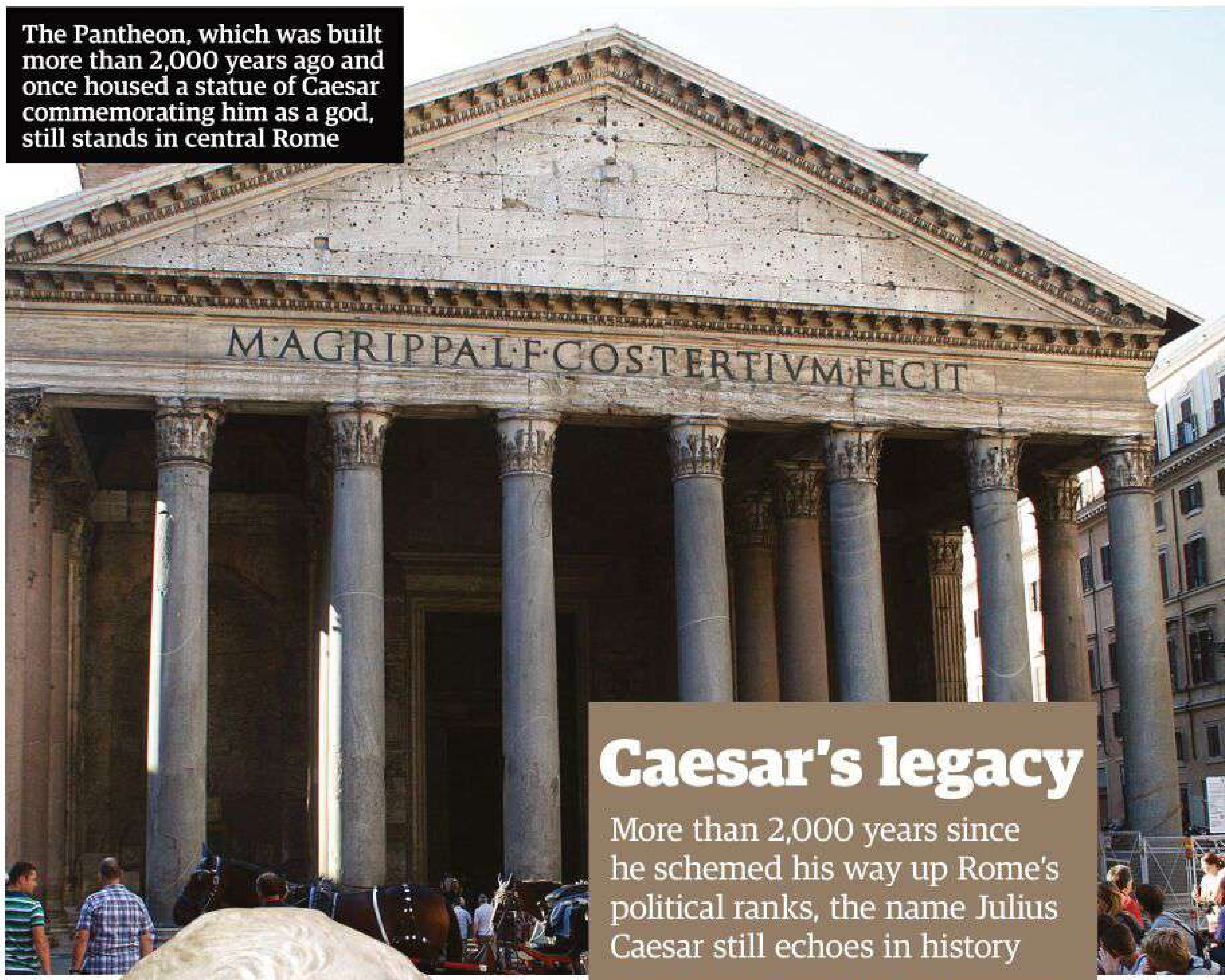
Druidism is thought to have originated in Britannia, and to have been thence introduced into Gaul, and even now those who wish to become more accurately acquainted with it, generally repair thither, for the sake of learning it.





An illustration of the invasion of Briton, commanded by Julius Caesar





The Pantheon, which was built more than 2,000 years ago and once housed a statue of Caesar commemorating him as a god, still stands in central Rome

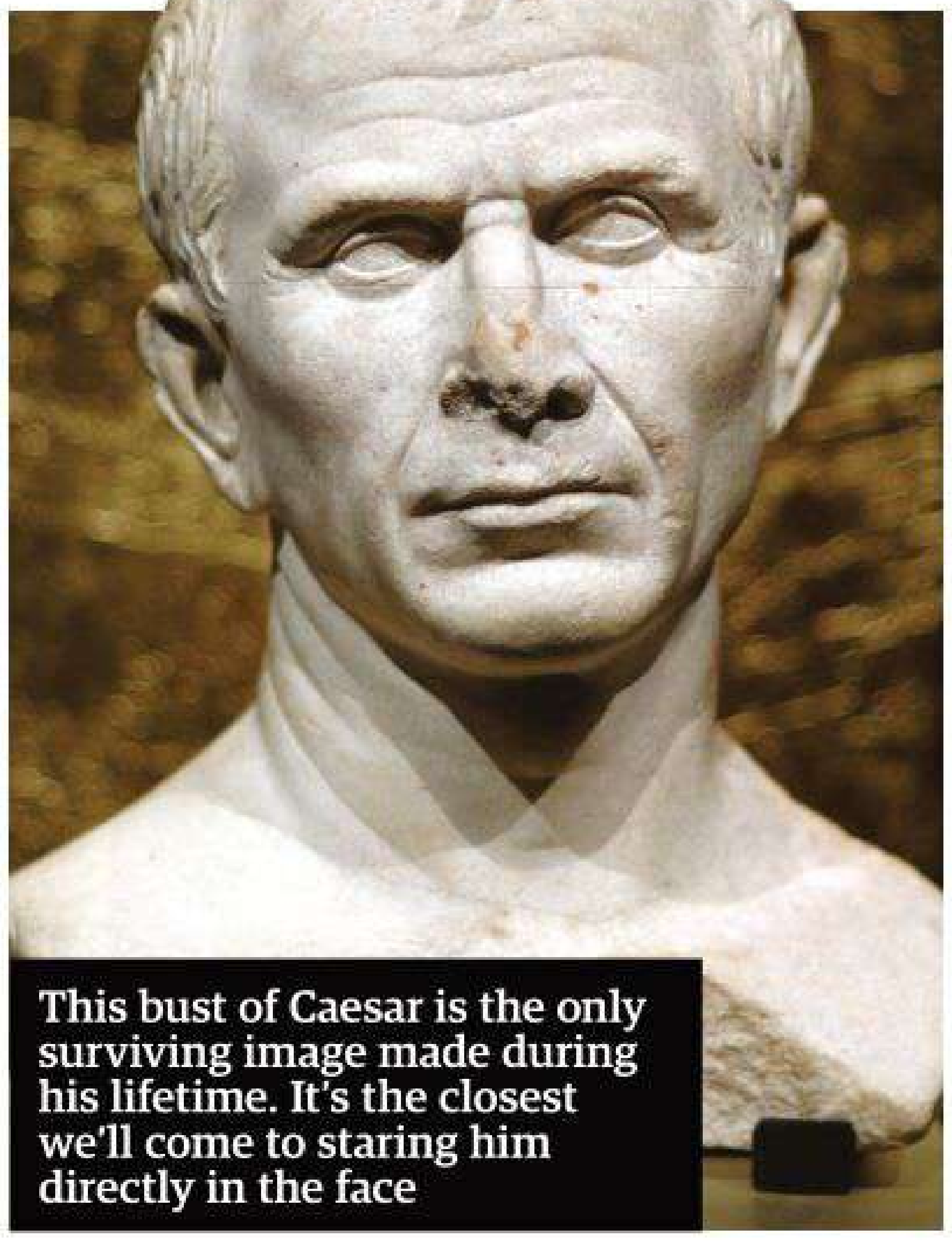
Caesar's legacy

More than 2,000 years since he schemed his way up Rome's political ranks, the name Julius Caesar still echoes in history

After Caesar returned to Gaul he waged war there for two more years, then returned to Rome, and conquered that too, after a bloody four-year civil war. Before he could crown himself emperor, however, he was assassinated by a gang of senators eager to free Rome from his tyrannical grip.

To the people of Rome, though, Caesar was no tyrant. They chased his murderers from the city sparking a further civil war. It ended with Caesar's son Octavian being crowned emperor, ending Rome's status as a republic and ushering in an imperial dynasty that would last for 400 years.

In life, Caesar may never have got to be the Romans' emperor, but in death they commemorated him as a deity, building a statue of him in the Pantheon – Rome's hall of the gods. History, though, remembers the man quite simply as one of the greatest who ever lived.



This bust of Caesar is the only surviving image made during his lifetime. It's the closest we'll come to staring him directly in the face

The aftermath

Caesar gained next to nothing from his invasions, but the system he left behind was to pave the way for Rome's return

While Caesar was still tangling with the British resistance leader Cassivellaunus, word reached him that there was trouble back across the Channel in Gaul. With their great conqueror out of the country, busy trying to add Britannia to Rome's wish list, the Gauls had seized the opportunity to rise up and rebel against their Roman overlords.

Caesar couldn't afford to keep his back turned for much longer. He may have successfully defeated Britannia's southern tribes, but that was no guarantee that those further west or to the north would accept Rome as their new ruler. Getting bogged down in what would inevitably have become a costly guerrilla war was not something that Caesar could even consider. It was by now early September, and with the unmistakable smell of autumn in the air, Caesar began to make his plans to return to the continent before the weather turned against him.

The peace terms he made with Cassivellaunus were hastily drawn up and remarkably generous. One of the first British tribal leaders to join Caesar had been Mandubracius. His father had been king of the Trinovante tribe that Cassivellaunus had defeated, grabbing the Trinovante's land in the process. Mandubracius was now installed as leader of the Trinovantes, his lands were returned and Cassivellaunus was given the equivalent of a Classical-era restraining order. Caesar also demanded that the defeated Britons hand over hostages to be taken as slaves, and for a fixed tribute from the southern tribes to be paid to Rome annually. And that was it. Caesar jumped back on his boat and was never seen in Britain again.

His legacy, though, was to last forever. In his wake he left behind a series of client kings throughout southern and eastern England. These "kings on strings'", including Cassivellaunus and Mandubracius, and the lands that they ruled over, from Norfolk, Essex and Kent to Sussex, Hampshire and Berkshire, were all supposedly "allied" to Rome.

The likely reality is that the annual tribute promised by these British tribes was never paid, and neither could they be described as part of the Roman Empire, despite the claims of Roman propagandists. Back in Rome, people soon realised that Britain was not going to yield the profits they had hoped for; there was no silver, nor any hope of booty except for slaves. Yet the expeditions brought Caesar huge and highly favourable public attention, with citizens across the land telling tales of chariots and barbarians who painted their bodies blue with woad. As far as they were concerned, the landing was a triumph, even though the actual results were barely noticeable.

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Enemies of the state

Adversaries from the Atlantic coast to the Middle East defined the trajectory of Julius Caesar's illustrious career

As befitted such a mighty and ambitious civilisation, Rome never lacked its share of enemies or rivals. Through the centuries clashes with Carthage, Macedon, the Etruscans and the Seleucid Empire had all shaped the contours of Roman history. During the 1st century BCE old animosities with the kingdom of Pontus in Asia Minor continued to simmer.

Spheres of influence collided during the long reign of Mithridates VI, and Caesar himself would be forced to confront Pharnaces II, an engagement that prompted one of Caesar's most famous utterances: "I came, I saw, I conquered." Fortunately, this proved to be a rather easy triumph for Caesar: according to the historian Suetonius, Pharnaces was "vanquished in a single battle within five days of [Caesar's] arrival and four hours of getting sight of him". Caesar is said to have remarked upon his good fortune at "gaining the principal fame as a general by victory over such feeble foes".

A little further east, the impressive Parthian Empire, centred on present-day Iran and Iraq, also remained a thorn in the Roman side throughout the period, seeking to lure allies away from Rome and joining battle at inopportune moments. Caesar's great political friend and financial backer Marcus Licinius Crassus would perish at the Battle of Carrhae in 53 BCE and, at the time of Caesar's death, another major expedition against Parthia was in the offing.

> Further east, the impressive Parthian Empire also remained a thorn in the Roman side throughout the period.

Grand geopolitical struggles were still very much part of Caesar's political worldview, but other less illustrious – though still decidedly troublesome – groups dominated much of his military career. Early on, during his period as governor of Further Spain, Caesar was introduced to the disruptive potential of resentful local tribes (in this case the Lusitani and the Callaeci) to foment hugely disruptive rebellions. This was an important precursor of the enmities faced by Caesar during his tenure from 58 to 50 BCE as proconsul of Cisalpine Gaul, Illyricum and Transalpine Gaul.

Gaul was a patchwork of many local tribal groups who routinely flitted between alliances with Rome and irritation at Rome's intrusions. Into the bargain, neighbouring Germanic tribes, which had been blighting Roman plans for centuries, added another layer of menace. Caesar, especially in his famous annual commentaries on his time in Gaul, was an adept publicist, signalling how much he had done to diminish threats to Roman security in a bid to justify his extended period of governance in the region. Many Romans, both at the time and subsequently, avidly praised Caesar to

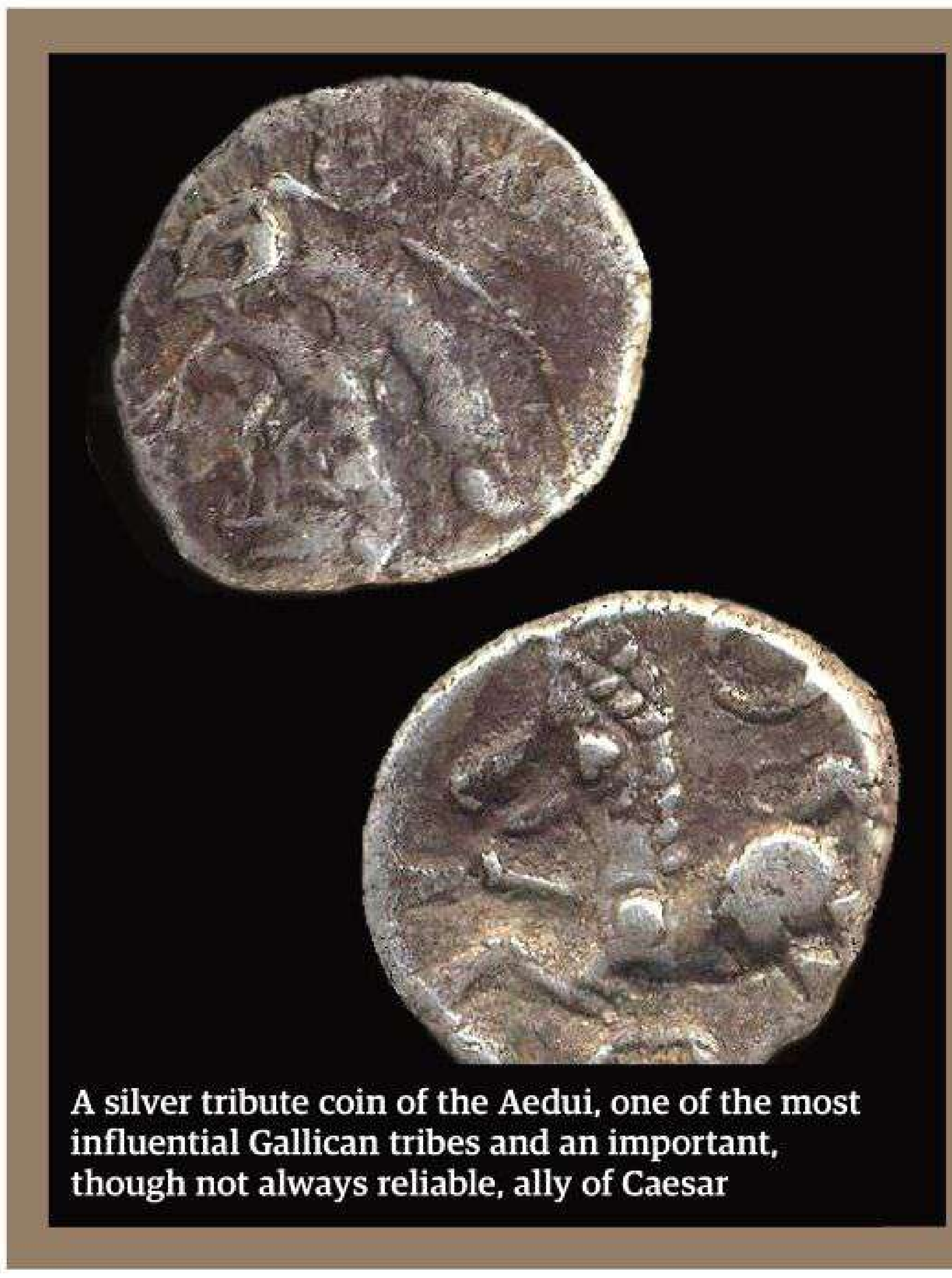
The death of Cato the Younger: despair at Caesar's triumphs led him to commit suicide

Mithridates VI of Pontus, a king who did more than most to challenge Roman power in the near east

the skies for all he had achieved. With more than a pinch of exaggeration, the writer Plutarch would recount how Caesar "took by storm more than eight hundred cities, subdued three hundred nations, and fought pitched battles at different times with three million men". Suetonius was more circumspect in his analysis, complaining that Caesar "did not let slip any pretext for war, however unjust or dangerous it might be, picking quarrels as well with allies as with hostile and barbarous nations".

In fairness, many of Caesar's actions were taken in response to tangible threats of rebellion or pursued in answer to pleas of assistance from allies in Gaul. This was certainly true of many of the campaigns early in his pro-consulship. The migrations of the Helvetii, an eastern Gallican tribe from modern-day Switzerland, were one such example. At times, Caesar lavished praise on the Helvetii, describing how they "excel the rest of the Gauls in valour". He also noted their habit of burning their stores behind them so as to make retreat more difficult, a sign of their determination.

Nonetheless, their movements posed an obvious challenge to Roman allies (chiefly the Aedui) in Gaul, and it was intolerable to have "a warlike tribe, unfriendly to the Roman people" destabilising an area "at once unprotected and very rich in grain". Caesar also hammered home the point that it was the Aedui who pleaded for the intervention of Roman forces, with their emissaries arguing that the Aedui "had always deserved too well of the Roman people to merit the devastation of



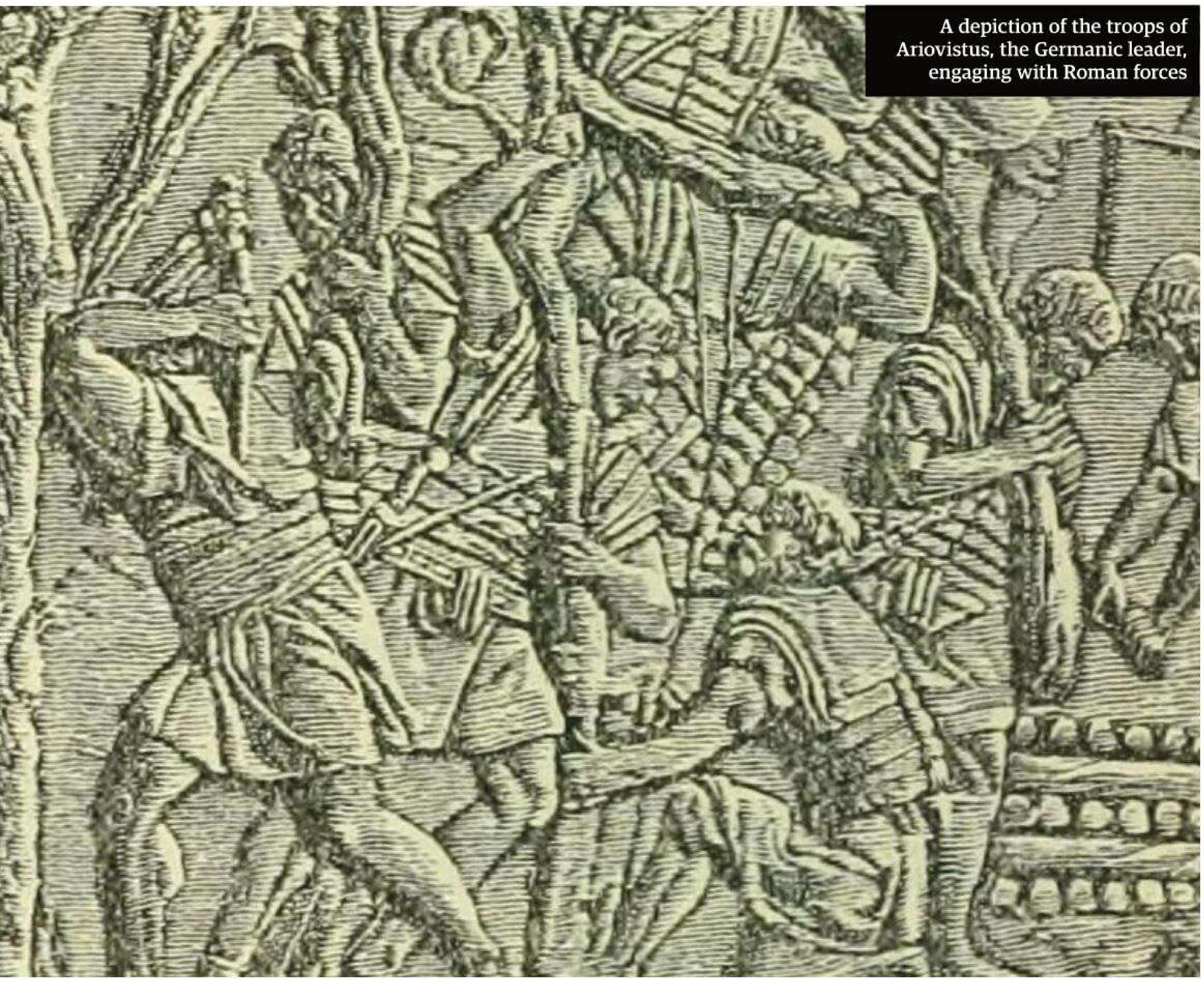
A silver tribute coin of the Aedui, one of the most influential Gallican tribes and an important, though not always reliable, ally of Caesar

The Aedui

Among the many Gallican tribes who forged alliances with Rome, the Aedui of central France enjoyed a particularly close relationship. Their status as "brother kinsmen of Rome" brought significant political and economic benefits and allowed the Aedui to call upon Rome for assistance against their enemies and rivals, including neighbouring tribes such as the Arverni and the Helvetii. This privileged status had been sustained for six decades before Caesar's arrival in Gaul and, during the early years of the proconsulship, appeared to remain mutually beneficial.

The Aedui willingly provided logistical support and could always be relied upon for supplies of grain. Even with the arrival of Vercingetorix's rebellion in 52 BCE, the Aedui were at first loyal to Rome, though tensions within the tribe began to emerge. A united front had not always been easy to sustain within the Aedui's ranks, as typified by the competition between one of the tribe's leaders, Diviciacus, a man held in great esteem by Caesar, and his brother Dumnorix, who it was reported "hated Caesar and the Romans", whose arrival had "diminished his power and restored his brother to influence and honour".

Ultimately the Aedui joined the pan-Gallic rebellion, albeit reluctantly, though in the aftermath Caesar was merciful, taking no hostages as slaves and avoiding overly punitive punishments. Cordial relations swiftly resumed.



A depiction of the troops of Ariovistus, the Germanic leader, engaging with Roman forces

their lands”. Following the defeat of the Helvetii, Caesar recalled that grateful Aedui chieftains threw themselves in tears at his feet.

Similar logic prevailed in Caesar’s campaigns against the Germanic tribe the Suebi under their formidable leader Ariovistus. They too challenged the territorial prerogatives of local Gallican tribes by crossing the Rhine, and Caesar felt entirely justified in dealing harshly with a “reckless barbarian… exercising a proud and cruel tyranny”. Further north, beyond the main territories of Roman Gaul, the rebellions of Belgic tribes were likewise impossible to ignore, and Caesar won victories over tribes such as the Nervii, with further squabbles in Brittany and northwest Gaul continuing over the coming years.

Caesar flatly rejected the claims of tribes such as the seafaring Veneti who, so they brazenly announced, “chose rather to abide in their liberty received from their ancestors than to end in Roman slavery”. A complicating factor in these northerly engagements was the role of Britain, seen by Caesar as supporting rebellion. This was one of the principal reasons behind the launching of expeditionary and then full-scale expeditions to Britain, which opened up a new military front and energised another raft of Roman enemies.

Some of these conflicts, notably with the Nervii, were close-run affairs, so it was no surprise when, in the wake of victory against the Nervii in 57 BCE, the Roman Senate declared an unusually long 15-day period of holiday, sacrifice and festivity. “An honour,” Caesar gleefully recorded, “that had previously fallen to no man.”

Even greater challenges lay ahead, however. Rome had usually been able to exploit the simmering rivalries between the Gallican tribes, and some important groups had seen sense in maintaining close friendships with Rome: it brought great political and economic advantage.

The nature of Caesar’s rule did provoke much consternation, however. He was accused of treating enemies or troublesome figures in arbitrary ways and of undermining tribal relationships.

In the wake of victory against the Nervii in 57 BCE the Senate declared an unusually long 15-day period of holiday and festivity.

“The rebellions of Belgic tribes were impossible to ignore, and Caesar won victories over tribes such as the Nervii”

One flashpoint arrived in the winter of 54 BCE with the rebellion of Ambiorix, which inflicted major casualties on Roman troops. Worse was to come with the more wide-ranging, almost pan-Gallican uprising of Vercingetorix, ‘victor of a hundred battles’ as his name proudly boasted. As Plutarch put it, “the danger was seen to have been so great when so many nations at once had broken out in revolt”. For the most part, Vercingetorix and his allies pursued a scorched-earth policy, engaging in guerilla tactics, since pitched battles would have played to Roman strengths, but the conflict during 52 BCE finally resolved itself through sieges of places such as Avaricum and Alesia.

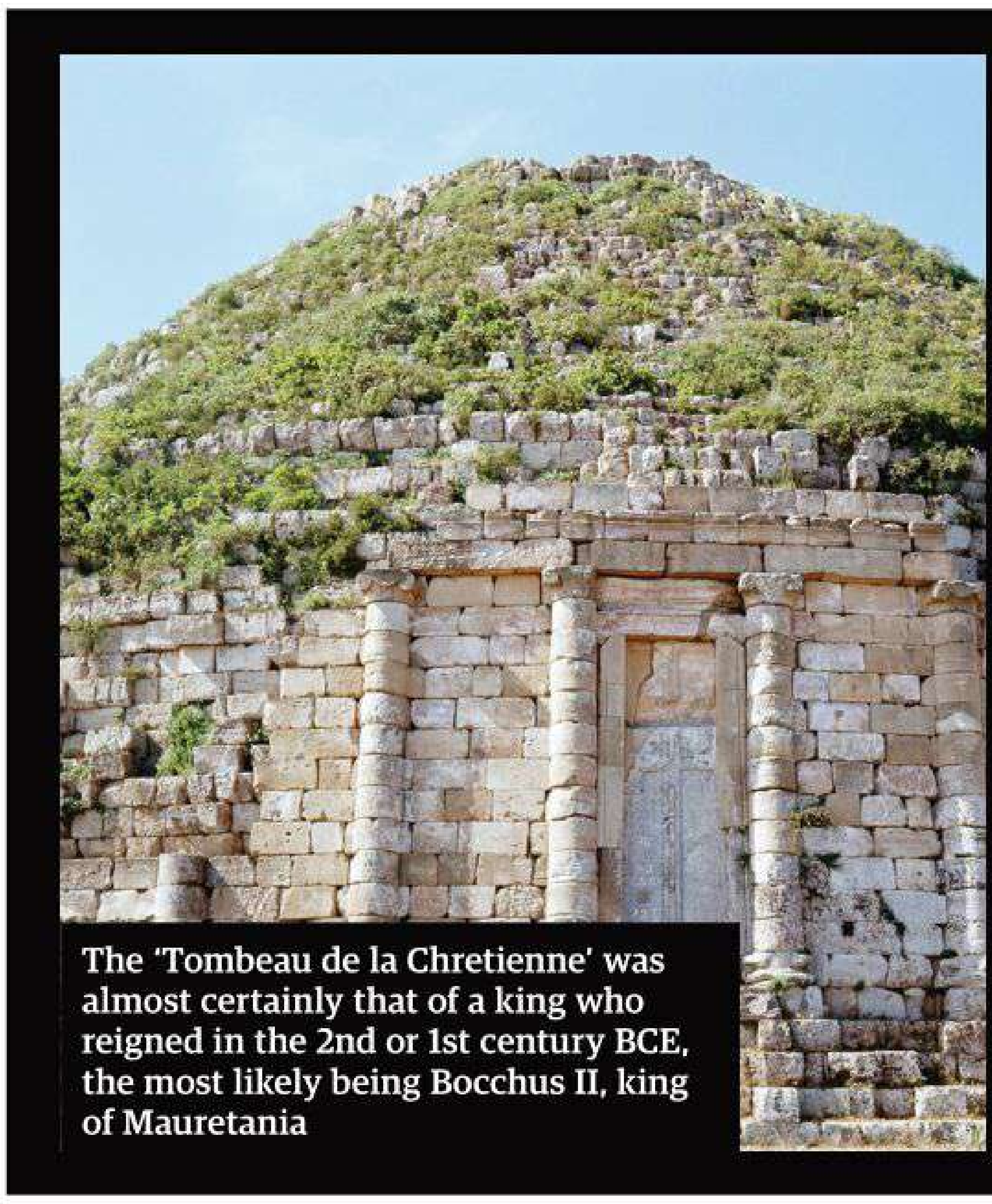
After Caesar’s crucial victories, Vercingetorix was held in captivity for five years and executed in 46 BCE, but he would gain an enviable posthumous reputation, one that still resonates in France, as a champion of Gallican liberties. He certainly stands as one of the most dangerous foes Caesar faced.

Not that the adversaries were ever reserved to the far-flung possessions of the Republic. Throughout his meteoric rise, Caesar had managed to acquire an impressive number of political enemies at home, but Pompey the Great would prove to be the most determined. Pompey had, of course, been an ally of Caesar before the two men fell to battling over the future of the Republic.

Caesar, Pompey and Crassus had formed the first triumvirate, and bonds were strengthened by Pompey’s marriage to Caesar’s daughter, Julia. This was always an allegiance of convenience, however, and relations began to sour as Caesar’s reputation soared during his Gallic campaigns. The deaths of Julia and Crassus, both mediating influences, did little to quieten tensions between the two men. Factionalism gave way to open hostility, and by 51 BCE Pompey was making his fears about Caesar’s rise perfectly clear. The famous story of Caesar’s return from Gaul, the crossing of the Rubicon, and the ensuing five-year civil war, beginning in 49 BCE, is well known. Here, too, the complex world of Roman alliances and rivalries played a crucial role and, as Plutarch explained, the conflict “opened with broad gates to cover the whole earth”.

Pompey deliberately abandoned Rome and, after time in Spain, headed to Greece, where he was soundly routed at the Battle of Pharsalus in August 48 BCE. But escaping to Egypt proved a false step: Ptolemy was executed, Caesar arrived in the east, and intervention in the affairs of another rival power – the struggle between Cleopatra and her co-regent Ptolemy XIII – got underway, with Caesar’s allegiance made perfectly clear. Pompey’s allies did not abandon the struggle, and in North Africa yet more networks of alliances evolved.

Caesar’s enemies, including Metellus Scipio and Cato the Younger, found common cause with Juba, ruler of Numidia – a kingdom taking up much of present-day northeastern Algeria and northern Libya. It was said that Juba’s antipathy towards Caesar derived, at least in part, from an insult endured in Rome years earlier. Caesar had publicly



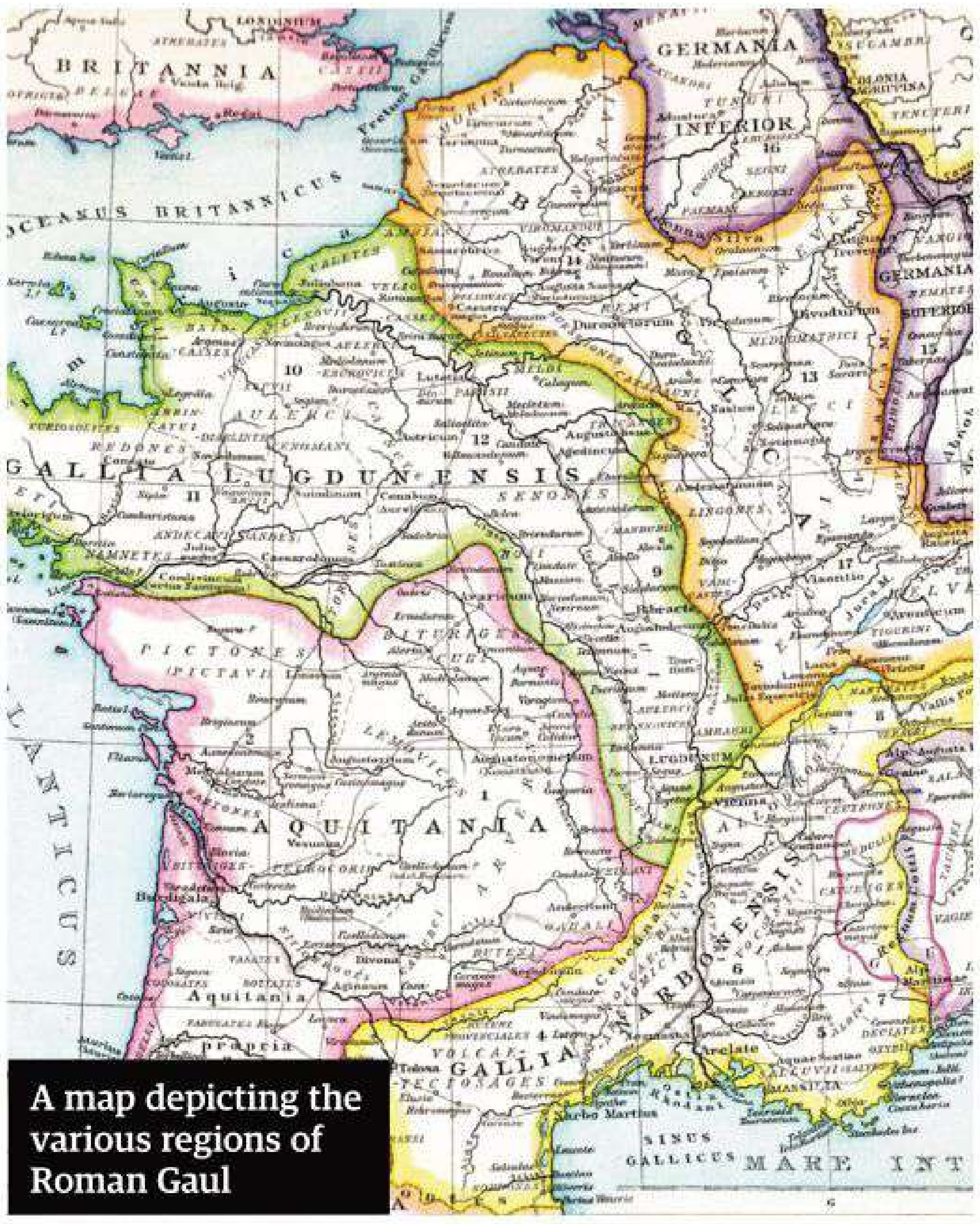
The 'Tombeau de la Chretienne' was almost certainly that of a king who reigned in the 2nd or 1st century BCE, the most likely being Bocchus II, king of Mauretania

Bocchus and Bogud

The North African kingdom of Mauretania had enjoyed a complex relationship with Rome in the decades before Caesar's arrival on the political scene. In the late second century BCE the ruler Bocchus I had struggled to decide between remaining loyal to Rome or supporting the machinations of his son-in-law Jugurtha. Ultimately, he determined that might was right and lured Jugurtha into a trap where he was handed over to the Romans.

Bocchus' successors, the co-ruling brothers Bocchus II and Bogud, would play a significant role in Caesar's campaigns during the civil war against the supporters of Pompey the Great. North Africa proved to be a crucial theatre of conflict, and Mauretania was a vital ally in the fight against Caesar's enemy Juba I of Numidia.

The pivotal battle took place at Thapsus in April 46 BCE. The rewards for victory included annexation of some Numidian territory, and Bogud would go on to fight for Caesar over the coming turbulent years.

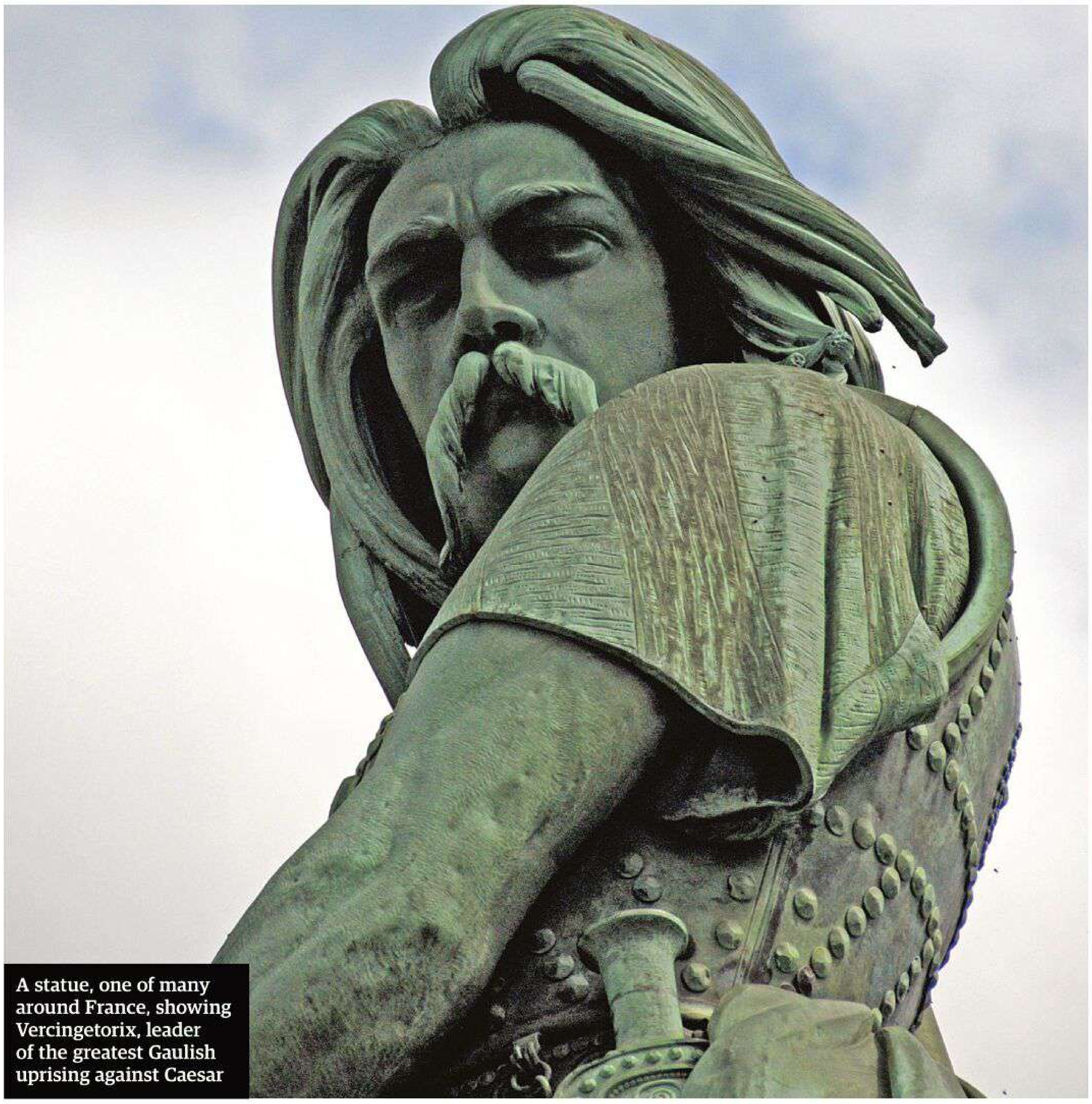


A map depicting the various regions of Roman Gaul

tugged at Juba's beard – a gesture of profound disrespect. In any event, Caesar found allies of his own, including Gallican troops and the forces of Numidia's rival power, Mauretania, and a famous victory was secured at the Battle of Thapsus in 46 BCE. The challenge of the Pompeian party, not least thanks to the efforts of Pompey's sons, briefly survived, but by 45 BCE the cause was all but lost.

In many of the dealings with his enemies it is easy to portray Caesar as pursuing brutal tactics, but he did face extraordinarily complex situations. In Gaul, for example, it is not always sufficient to see Rome as an unwelcome, occupying force. Caesar's enemies, to be sure, were able to deploy lofty rhetoric. Towards the end of Vercingetorix's rebellion one disgruntled Gallic leader offered a full-throated condemnation of Rome's policies: "What else do they seek or desire than to follow where envy leads, to settle in the lands and states of men whose noble report and martial strength they have learnt, and to bind upon them a perpetual slavery?" The sentiment was no doubt heartfelt, but Gaul was a deeply divided province from top to bottom, and many tribes courted and took full advantage of Roman favour.

Moreover, many tribes were routinely divided among themselves, and Caesar confronted unenviable strategic decisions. Just before the British expedition, for example, Caesar was distracted, much to his annoyance, by the internal wrangling of the Treveri, among whom two chieftains competed for primacy. Cingetorix quickly pledged his abiding loyalty to Caesar, while his rival Indutiomarus quietly raised armies in the forests of the Ardennes. Despite this, Indutiomarus sent delegations to the Romans and, even though he had his misgivings, Caesar appeared to accept pledges of fealty in exchange for the provision of hostages (the conventional way at the time of ensuring that agreements were honoured). Behind the scenes, however, Caesar urged the Treveri chieftains to support Indutiomarus' competitor,



A statue, one of many around France, showing Vercingetorix, leader of the greatest Gaulish uprising against Caesar

> "Gaul was a deeply divided province from top to bottom, and many tribes took full advantage of Roman favour"

Cingetorix, and this made a troublesome enemy of Indutiomarus. "Though he had privately kept hostility towards us, his indignation now burst far more vehemently into flame." This may appear reckless or meddlesome on Caesar's part, but with an invasion across the English Channel to plan, what else was he to do?

In the end it was perhaps the allies and foes whose friendship or enmity was unwavering that made life a little easier for Caesar. En route to fighting the Belgae, it was reassuring to encounter a tribe like the Remi, a group who Caesar always held in high esteem. They sent out two delegates, Iccius and Andecumborius, "to tell him that they surrendered themselves and all their stuff to the protection and power of Rome; that they had neither taken part with the rest of the Belgae, nor conspired against Rome; and that they were ready to give hostages, to do his commands, to receive him in their towns, and to assist him with corn and everything else". They had attempted to convince other local tribes to submit to Rome, sadly to no avail, but they could at least provide detailed figures about the military strength of the other Belgae tribes.

The Remi "affirmed that they had exact information in all particulars because, as they were closely connected by relationship and intermarriage, they had learnt how large a contingent each chief had promised for the present campaign in the general council of the Belgae". Small wonder that "Caesar addressed the Remi in a speech of generous encouragement; then he commanded their whole senate to assemble at his headquarters, and the children of their chieftains to be brought thither as hostages. All these commands were punctiliously and punctually performed."

The Nervii were unremitting in their hostility to Rome and possessed an ability to secure allegiances with other tribes.

Such loyalty was advantageous, but so in a way was total confidence in a rival's enduring antipathy. Caesar never had to question the goals and the motives of a group such as the Nervii. They were unremitting in their hostility to Rome, possessed an uncanny ability to secure alliances with other northern tribes (putting as many as 60,000 men into the field on occasion), and apt to make absurd demands during any negotiations. Caesar had respect for the Nervii, recalling that during one battle "So great was the valour of troops, and such their presence of mind, that although they were everywhere scorched by flame and harrowed by the vast missiles… not only did no man leave the rampart to withdraw from the fight, but scarcely a man even looked behind him."

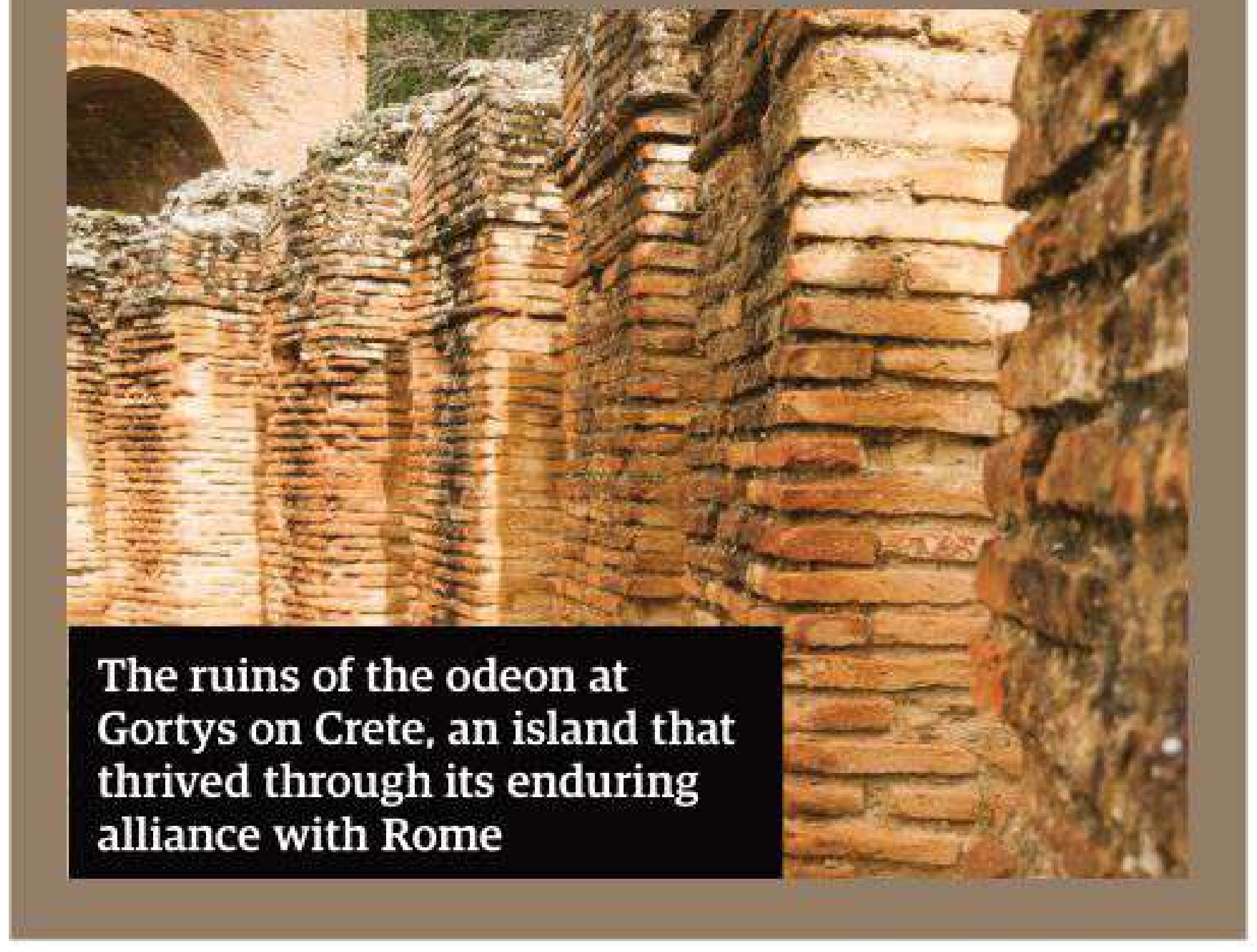
Caesar also knew precisely where he stood with the Nervii, and this had its advantages. Such certainty was in short supply across the Roman provinces. At one stage Gallic tribes would be fighting for Rome against Germanic invaders, then a few years later, Germanic mercenaries would be recruited by Rome in their struggles against suddenly rebellious Gauls. Indeed, it was the shifting affections and affiliations of allies and enemies that provoked so much chaos.

Crete

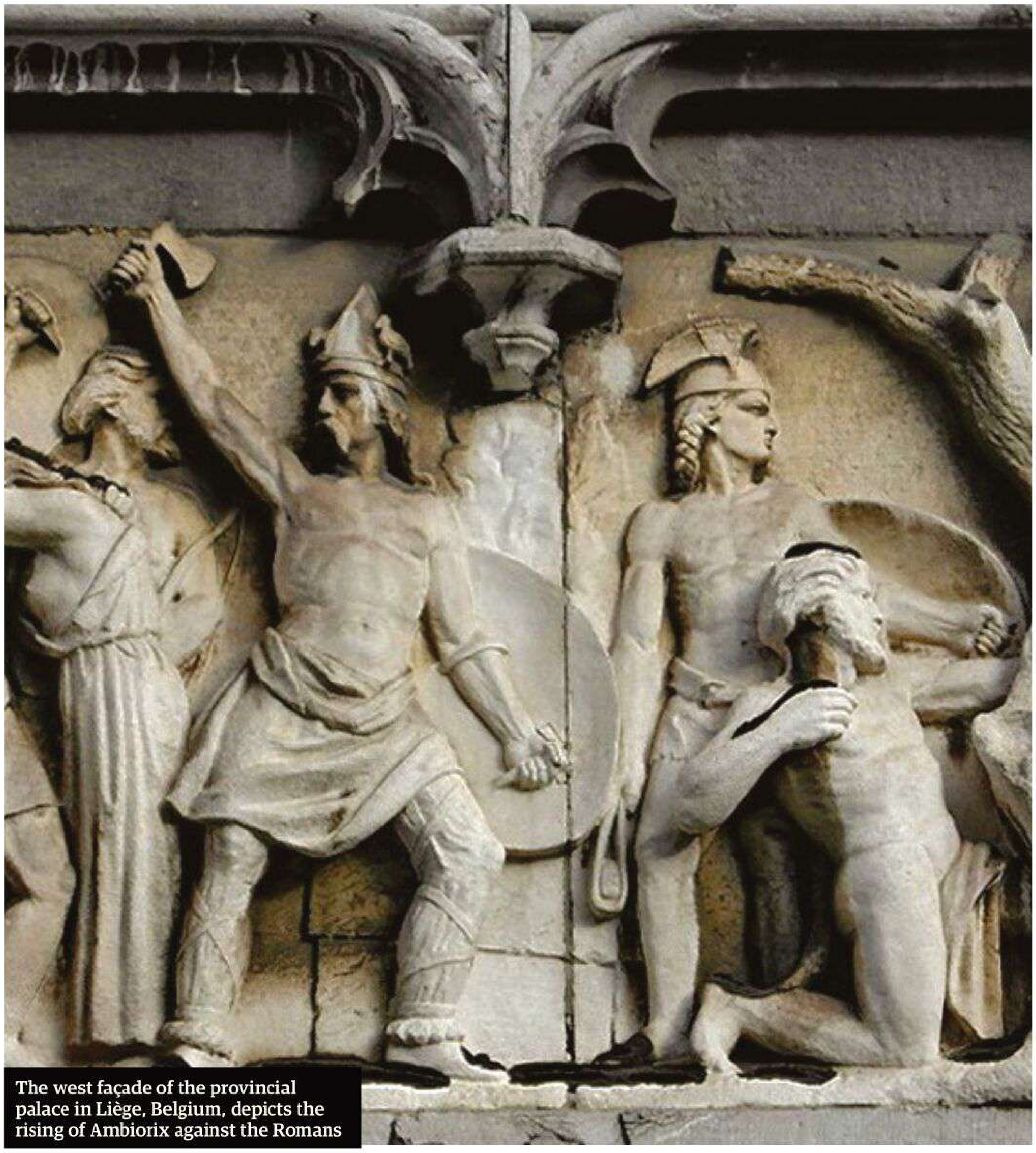
One of the great advantages of possessing so many provinces and cultivating so many client kingdoms was that Rome could count on the specialised military talents of peoples from many nations. This was particularly true of cavalry, a profession that had rather fallen out of fashion among the Roman elite.

In his various campaigns, Caesar also made use of 'slingers' from the Balearic Islands and archers from Syria and Numidia. This latter profession was also a speciality of Crete, an island that enjoyed an unusually long and amicable relationship with Rome. As part of the conflicts with Mithridates VI of Pontus, Rome finally seized control of Crete in 68 BCE, and it would form part of a joint province with Cyrenaica, comprising part of present-day Libya. Rome did not make undue efforts to impose itself on the island, and for long stretches of time Crete was able to prosper economically and culturally, sustain its identity and customs and increase its population.

Crete was always of major strategic importance due to its position in the Mediterranean, but it largely avoided involvement in Rome's endless round of conflicts. The archers of the island, however, always remained in high demand.



The ruins of the odeon at Gortys on Crete, an island that thrived through its enduring alliance with Rome



The west façade of the provincial palace in Liège, Belgium, depicts the rising of Ambiorix against the Romans

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Caesar in love

Discover the marriages, affairs and scandals that helped to propel Caesar from minor patrician to the most powerful man in the Mediterranean

Behind every great man stands a great woman. Or, in Julius Caesar's case, six women: three wives and three mistresses.

In contrast with many other classical civilisations, Roman marriage was a monogamous institution that allowed a citizen to have only one spouse at a time. Each wedding was an opportunity for patrician families to bind themselves in political alliances, linking like-minded people together for their joint benefit, and allowing ambitious young men like Caesar to climb the greasy pole to power.

However, Roman marriage was a lopsided affair that favoured men. Wives were expected to be loyal, silent and subservient, yet a blind eye was usually turned to a husband's illicit sexual liaisons. Prostitutes and dancing girls were considered fair game; so was keeping a mistress, as long as she was unmarried so as not to sully the reputation of her own husband. Other males were often targets of affection too, since homosexuality was tolerated, although males who were penetrated by other males were considered effeminate and reviled.

Divorce and remarriage occurred, and was usually free of shame, although that did not prevent gossip circulating if immoral behaviour was the cause.

Yet, as with many other aspects of his remarkable career, Caesar did not always play by the rules when it came to his love life. Caesar's three marriages saw him climb in social status and form key alliances, but they were also marred by tragedy and rocked by scandal. He engaged in affairs with married women, he was seduced by royalty, and he was possibly beguiled by men. He was even killed by the son of his own lover. Welcome to Caesar's bedchamber: a place of love, scandal and intrigue.

> Caesar's three marriages saw him climb in social status and form key alliances, but they were also marred by tragedy and rocked by scandal.

Cornelia

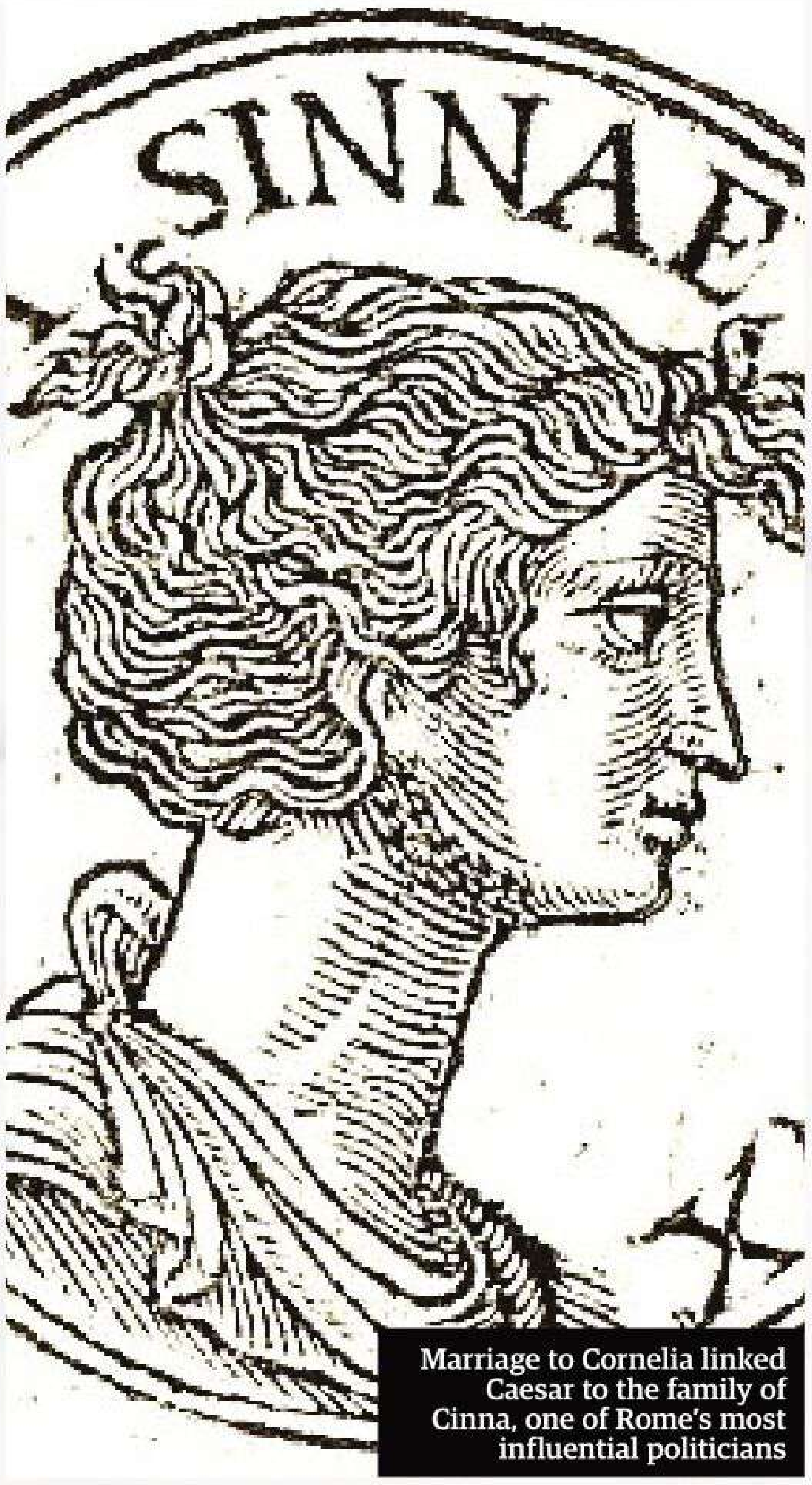
Caesar's first marriage saw him rise through the ranks but also incur the wrath of Rome's dictator

Position: First wife **Date of marriage:** c.83-c.69 BCE

When Caesar and Cornelia married around 83 BCE, both bride and groom were still mourning the deaths of both their fathers. Caesar was an ambitious 17 year old who was looking to move up in the world, but he was still only the new head of a family with relatively little influence. In contrast, Cornelia came from an influential home - she was the daughter of a leading Roman politician, Cinna. He had recently been killed in a soldier's mutiny, but prior to that had been consul for four consecutive years, and a staunch supporter of Marius in his civil war with Sulla.

Caesar hoped that marrying Cinna's daughter would draw him closer to the seat of power, but Sulla - who eventually triumphed in the civil war - saw Caesar's marriage as a threat. He commanded Caesar to divorce Cornelia, and stripped him of his positions, inheritance and dowry. However, Caesar refused to buckle to Sulla, and escaped Rome in disguise rather than forsake his new wife. Sulla was eventually persuaded to relent, and allowed Caesar to return to his marital home.

Caesar soon embarked on a military career and spent years away from Rome, which perhaps explains why his 13-year marriage to Cornelia was not a fruitful one. The couple had a single daughter, Julia, Caesar's only legitimate child. The stillbirth of a second child also led to Cornelia's own death around 69 BCE, just before her husband was due to depart Rome once again. Julia was left in the care of Caesar's mother and, at the age of 30, the rising general was left a widower.



Marriage to Cornelia linked Caesar to the family of Cinna, one of Rome's most influential politicians

> "[Sulla] commanded Caesar to divorce Cornelia, and stripped him of his positions, inheritance and dowry"

Caesar's marriage to Cornelia drew the wrath of Sulla after he seized Rome in 82 BCE

Pompeia

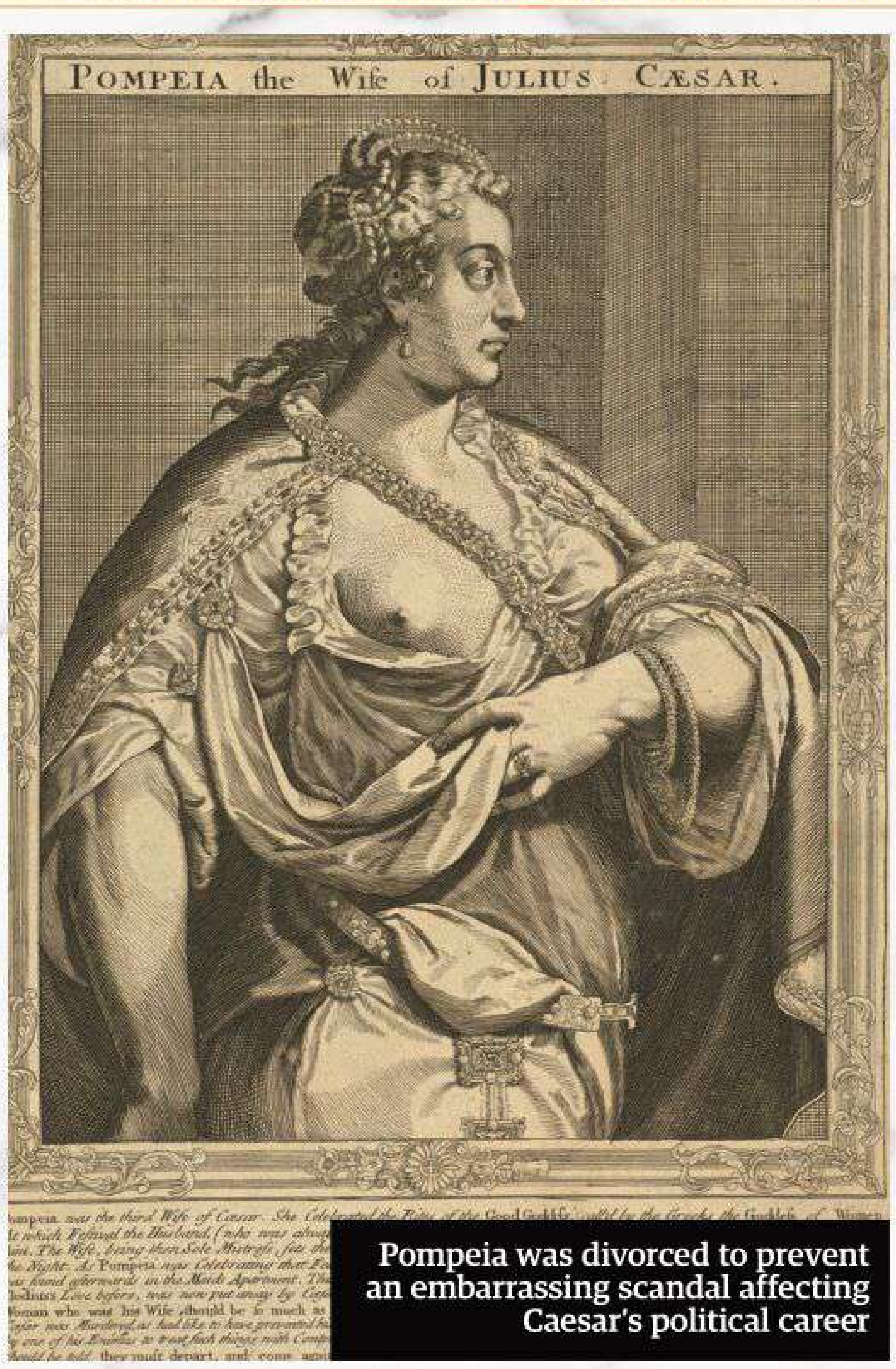
Scandal at an all-female festival brought Caesar's second marriage to a premature end

Position: Second wife **Date of marriage:** 67-61 BCE

Caesar returned to Rome a year after the death of his first wife, and quickly found a suitable replacement. Just like Cornelia, Pompeia was the daughter of a former consul who had been killed in the civil war. She was also the granddaughter of Sulla, indicating that Caesar was willing to switch allegiances if it furthered his own ends.

Four years after the wedding, Caesar was elected to the important position of Pontifex Maximus, the chief priest of the Roman state religion. However, the grand appointment also led to the collapse of his marriage. Caesar's new role came with an official residence on the Via Sacra, in which Pompeia was tasked with hosting the festival of Bona Dea with the Vestal Virgins in attendance. No man was permitted to be present during the festivities, but that didn't stop a young troublemaker, Publius Clodius Pulcher, disguising himself as a woman and sneaking in. Apparently his intention was to seduce Pompeia, but he was caught and prosecuted for sacrilege. Whether Pompeia was aware of and consented to the plan has never been known.

The ensuing scandal was the tabloid fodder of the day. Both Pompeia and Caesar's mother gave evidence against Clodius at his trial, but Caesar remained stubbornly tight-lipped and refused to speak, helping Clodius to be acquitted. However, Caesar still chose to divorce Pompeia. Whether or not she was engaged in an affair, Caesar knew that the damage to his reputation had already been done. He famously stated that "my wife ought not even to be under suspicion," although that did not stop him in his own extra-marital affairs.


POMPEIA the Wife of JULIUS CÆSAR.

Pompeia was divorced to prevent an embarrassing scandal affecting Caesar's political career

P·SERVILI M·F
RVLLI

Servilia on a silver Denarius

Servilia

The longest relationship of Caesar's life came to an end only when he was murdered by her lover's son

Position: Wife of Decimus Junius Silanus
Date of affair: Pre 64-44 BCE

Servilia's first husband died in 77 BCE, her second husband died in 62 BCE. By the time she was a widow the second time, she had already begun an affair with Caesar, who was also on his second marriage. Although we don't know the exact date it began, we do know that the affair was longest relationship in both their lives, lasting until Caesar's death in 44 BCE.

It's clear that Caesar and Servilia were very fond of each other. He presented her with a rare black pearl from Gaul, and she would send love letters. One such note made the affair public when Caesar was acting in a secretive manner in the Senate. The letter he was reading was snatched from his hand by Cato the Younger – Servilia's half-brother no less – who read the document and discovered the clandestine tryst.

Servilia's family would cause further problems for Caesar. Both Cato and her son from her first marriage, Brutus, sided with Pompey during the civil war that followed the Second Triumvirate. After Pompey's defeat in the Battle of Pharsalus, Caesar gave orders not to harm Brutus if he was captured in battle, presumably out of respect for Servilia. However, Brutus did not return the favour. He was one of the assassins who stabbed Caesar to death on 44 BCE. Brutus himself committed suicide after being defeated in battle by Mark Antony, and the ashes were sent to his mother. Servilia lived out the rest of her life in comfort, and died of natural causes, a peaceful end that both her lover and son were denied.

Calpurnia

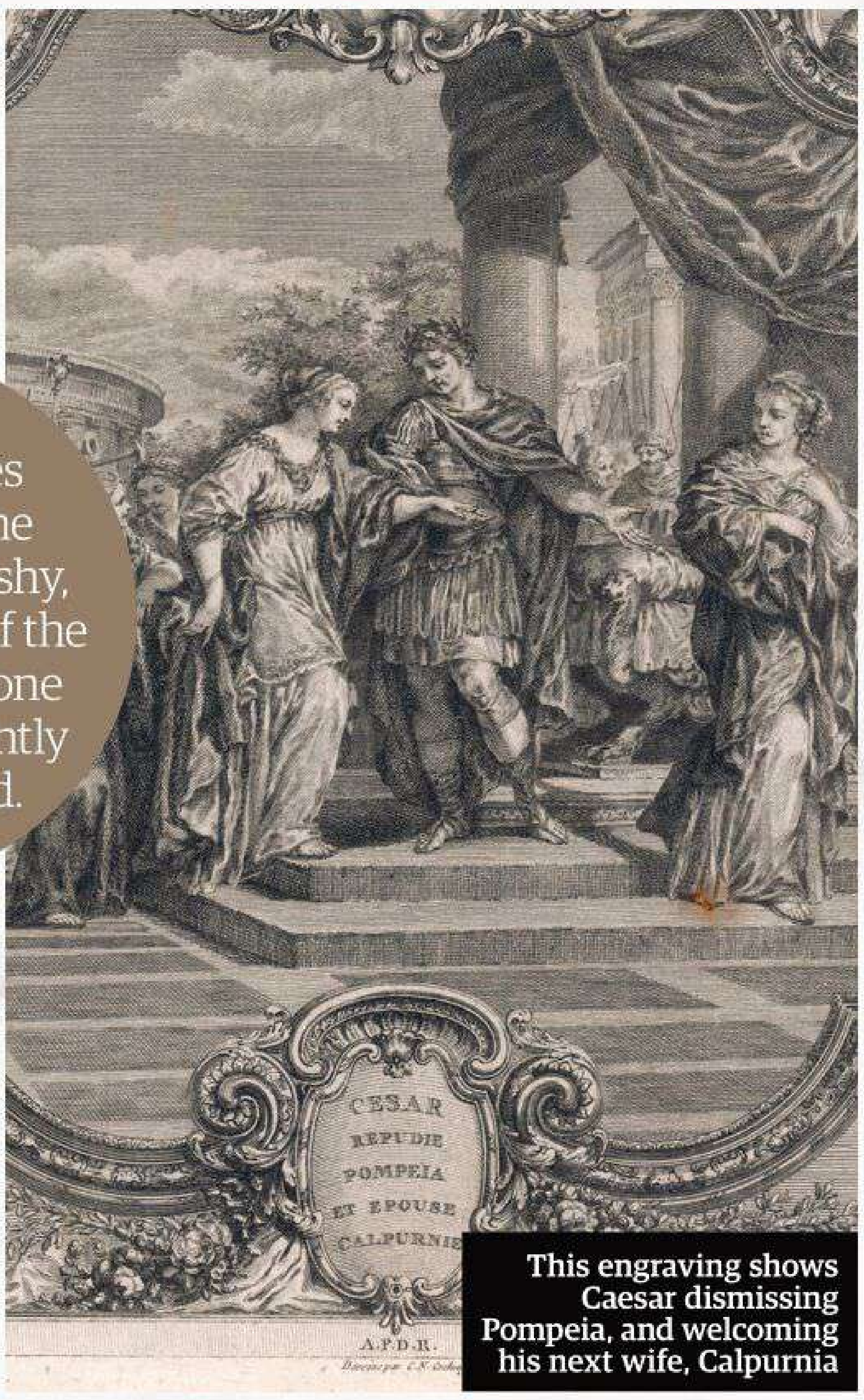
Caesar's third wife apparently foresaw her husband's assassination but was unable to prevent it

Position: Third wife **Date of marriage:** 59-44 BCE

If Caesar's second wife attracted scandal and damaged his reputation, his third and final wife was quite the opposite. The daughter of Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, another rising politician like Caesar, Calpurnia was 16 years old when she married 41-year-old Caesar, who was serving his first term as consul having established the First Triumvirate with Crassus and Pompey. Calpurnia was a few months younger than Caesar's daughter, Julia. Contemporaries reported that she was humble and shy, happy to live out of the spotlight that shone increasingly brightly on her husband during their marriage: Caesar would conquer Gaul within a few years of the wedding, before returning to cross the Rubicon and effectively seize control of Rome itself. Calpurnia was also intensely loyal, despite Caesar's philandering ways. Although they had no children, Calpurnia's marriage to Caesar lasted for 15 years, until his death.

Had Caesar listened to his wife on one fateful day, the union may have lasted even longer. On the Ides of March, 15 March 44 BCE, Calpurnia awoke from a dream in which she held Caesar's dead body in her arms. She begged her husband not to attend the Senate that day, and asked Brutus to send word that the dictator was ill. Caesar ignored his wife's worries and went to the Senate, only to be hacked down by a group of conspirators, including Brutus. After the murder, Calpurnia gave Caesar's will and personal papers to consul Marcus Antonius, and disappeared into the fog of history. She never remarried.

> Contemporaries reported that she was humble and shy, happy to live out of the spotlight that shone increasingly brightly on her husband.



This engraving shows Caesar dismissing Pompeia, and welcoming his next wife, Calpurnia

Cleopatra

Caesar's most famous love affair united two of the classical world's great civilisations

Position: Queen of Egypt **Date of affair:** 48-44 BCE

The first meeting between Caesar and Cleopatra has become the stuff of legend – hidden in a bedroll, the Queen of Egypt emerged and seduced the Roman leader with her celebrated beauty. The fact that Cleopatra may have simply been veiled rather than hidden in bedding spoils the story a little, but it is undoubted that the two became lovers soon after their first meeting, despite a 31-year age gap.

Caesar had travelled to Egypt in pursuit of Pompey, and found Egypt in the midst of its own civil war between husband and wife (not to mention brother and sister) co-monarchs, Ptolemy XIII and Cleopatra. The assassination of Pompey on the orders of Ptolemy brought the Roman conflict to an end, while Caesar's legions soon deposed Ptolemy in favour of his wife and Caesar's new mistress. Caesar remained in the country for a year; nine months into the stay, Cleopatra gave birth to a son. The Egyptian queen named the boy Caesarion (little Caesar), leaving few doubts as to who the father was.

Caesar abandoned any thoughts of conquering Egypt, and left Cleopatra ruling with a new co-monarch, her brother Ptolemy XIV – who she also married. Both rulers and Caesarion visited Rome in 46 BCE, but Caesar's continuing affair with Cleopatra scandalised the senators, who became even more concerned when Caesar erected a golden statue of the Egyptian queen in the Temple of Venus Genetrix. Cleopatra, Ptolemy and Caesarion were still in Rome when Caesar was assassinated in 44 BCE, after which they beat a hasty retreat to Egypt.

> "The two became lovers soon after their first meeting, despite a 31-year age gap"

Cleopatra on the terraces of Philae, 1896, by Frederick Arthur Bridgman

Eunoe

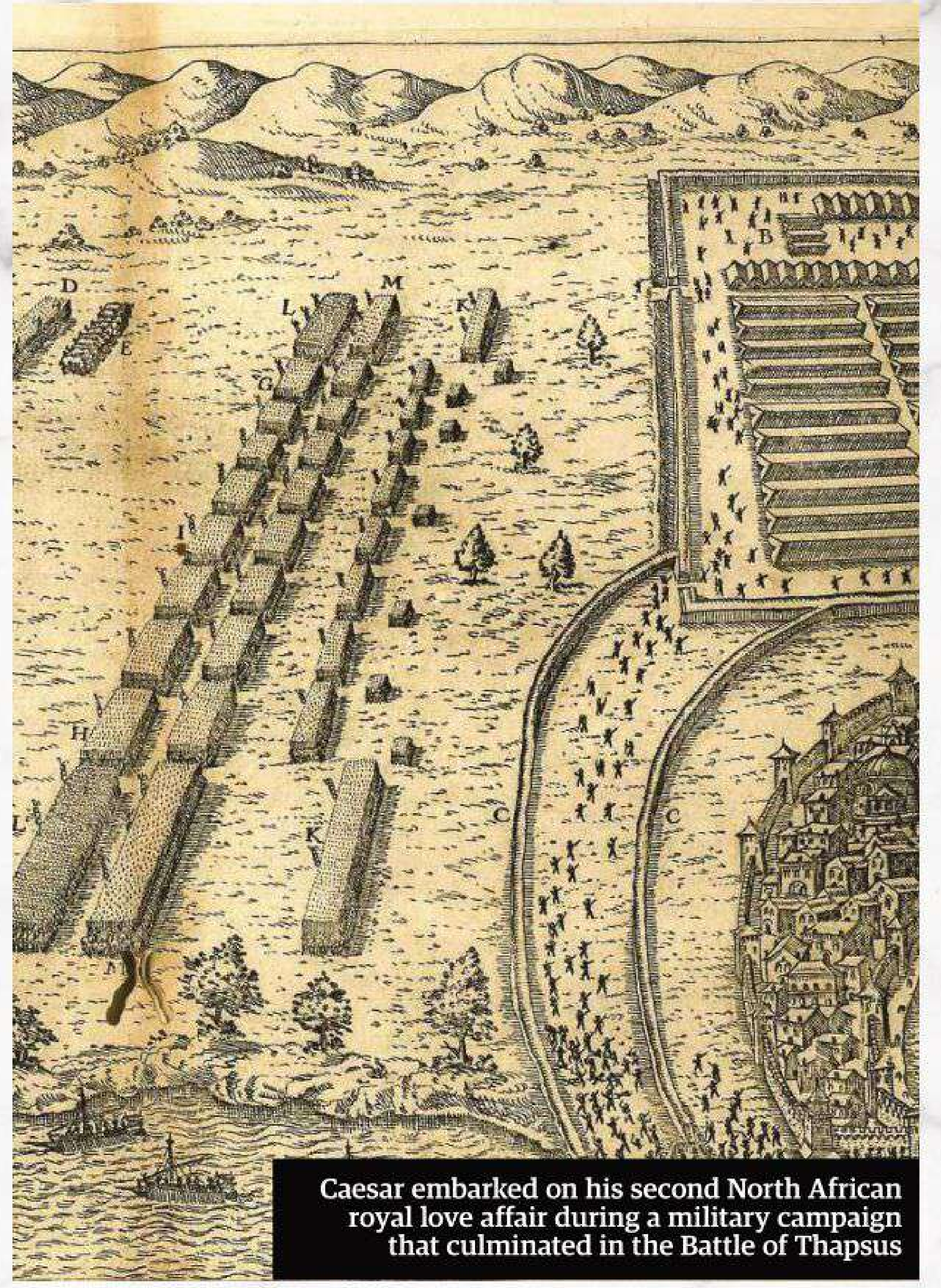
Caesar refused a crown himself, but that didn't seem to stop him chasing those who wore them

Position: Queen of Mauretania **Date of affair:** 46 BCE

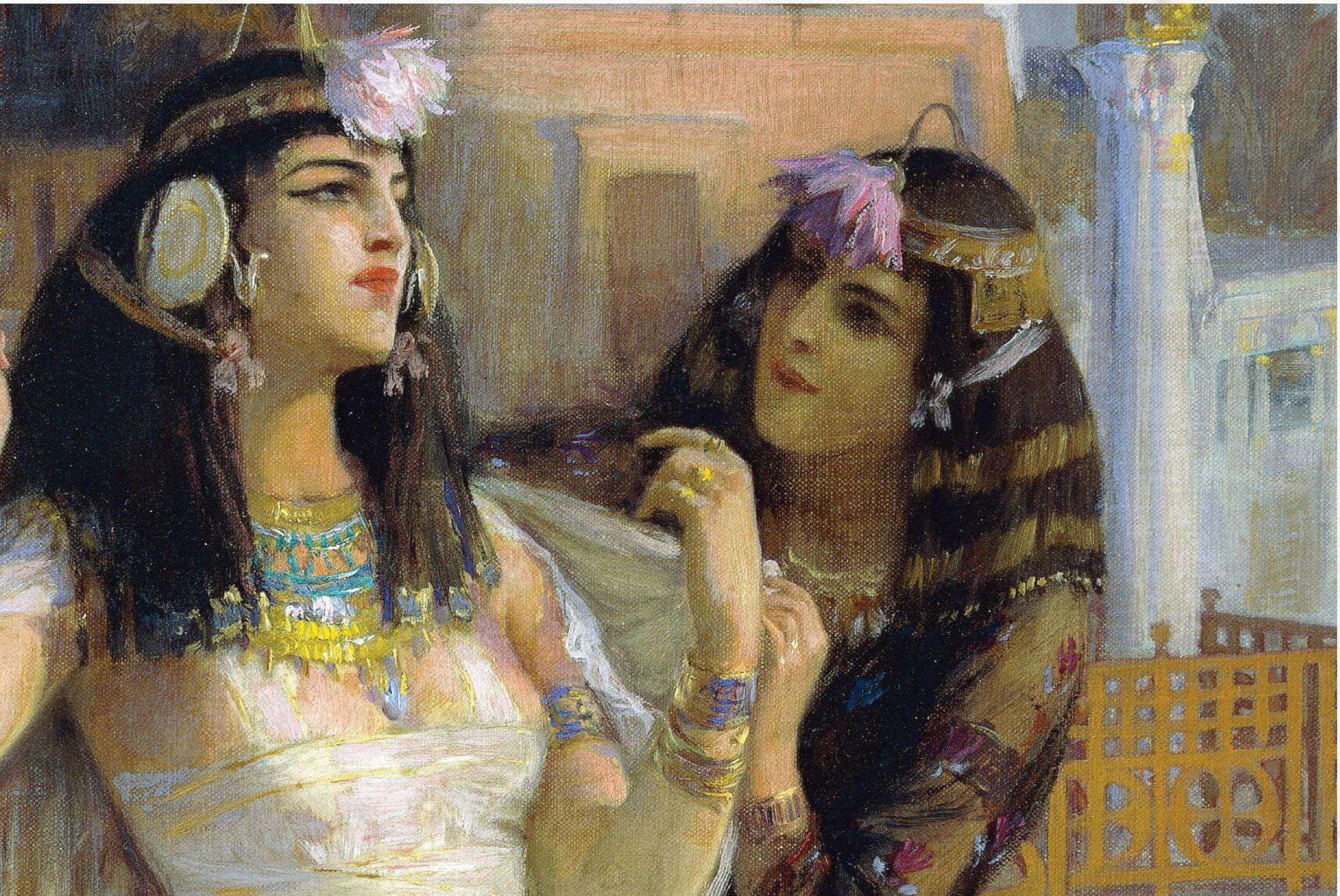
Cleopatra was not the only royal who won Caesar's affections. A year after the birth of Caesarion, Caesar found himself back courting royalty in North Africa. This time, he was in Mauretania (modern-day Algeria and Morocco) fighting the remnants of Pompey's supporters, and wooing the wife of his ally, King Bogudes, for good measure. The affair seems to have lasted only as long as Caesar's five-month campaign in the province, and Bogudes seems to have borne no grudges, perhaps helped by the gifts bestowed upon both he and his wife.

Nor, if rumour is to be believed, did Caesar wait until the last years of his life before pursuing royal love. In 80 BCE, 20-year-old Caesar was sent to the court of King Nicomedes IV of Bithynia in order to raise a fleet for the Republic. According to later gossip, the young ambassador caught the eye of the king and the two began a homosexual relationship. One quip was 'Caesar may have conquered the Gauls, but Nicomedes conquered Caesar', while others joked that Caesar was the Queen of Bithynia.

However, allegations that Caesar was homosexual should be taken with a pinch of salt since they were usually only repeated by Caesar's enemies. Although Roman society was tolerant of homosexuality (though less so than the Greeks), those who opposed Caesar's increasing power probably tried to sully the dictator's reputation by inventing sordid tales from his past and trying to portray him as effeminate. Other gossips suggested that Caesar had a homosexual fling with his engineer, Mamurra, or even with his adopted son, Octavian.



Caesar embarked on his second North African royal love affair during a military campaign that culminated in the Battle of Thapsus



Cleopatra: Queen of Egypt

How the middle daughter of a despised pharaoh fought, schemed and seduced her way to becoming the most famous Egyptian ruler of all

Egypt was in turmoil. In the year 81 BCE Ptolemy IX, the pharaoh who had dared to melt down the gold coffin of Alexander the Great, was dead. A series of bloody and violent family feuds had robbed his dynasty of any legitimate male heirs, so his popular and beloved daughter, Bernice III became queen. Following the family tradition, she married her half-brother, Plotemy XI, but just 19 days after the ceremony, the groom had his new bride murdered and claimed the throne as his own. The citizens of Alexandria were furious, and an angry mob quickly seized the new pharaoh and lynched him. This left Egypt leaderless and seemingly out of control.

Cleopatra was highly educated and is rumoured to have been able to speak as many as a dozen different languages.

As the commander of the army and the personification of god on Earth, a pharaoh's presence was essential to prevent mass unrest in Egypt and anyone, absolutely anyone, was better than no pharaoh at all. So the throne was offered to the illegitimate sons of Ptolemy IX, and Ptolemy XII stepped forward to claim it. A notorious womanizer with a fondness for drink and excess, he was hardly the shining beacon the struggling country needed to guide it through the darkness of the pit it had fallen into. A nickname for the illegitimate pharaoh quickly became popular – Nothos, or 'the bastard.' Ptolemy XII had at least five legitimate children, and Cleopatra VII was the second oldest after her sister, Berenice IV.

The young princess was clever and quick-witted, with an eager and curious mind driven by a near-insatiable thirst for knowledge. She easily excelled at her studies and even her esteemed scholars were amazed by her aptitude for languages, readily conversing with any foreign visitors whether they were Ethiopians, Hebrews, Troglodytes, Arabs, Syrians, Medes or Parthians. While she surrounded herself with the wonders of the academic world in the riches and luxury of the royal residence, outside her palace the real one was being stretched at the seams, in danger of being ripped apart.

Pharaoh Ptolemy XII was in a troublesome position. His father had promised Egypt to Rome, a promise the Roman Senate had chosen not to act on – not yet, at least. Still, Ptolemy XII was smart enough to understand that to keep the Romans happy was to ensure Egypt's survival. He sent masses of money and bribes to Julius Caesar (at that time one of Rome's most important figures), which secured the Romans' support, but dammed him in the eyes of his tax-burdened citizens. In 58 BCE he was forced into exile, taking his talented younger daughter with him. When he finally returned three years later, with the backing of a Roman

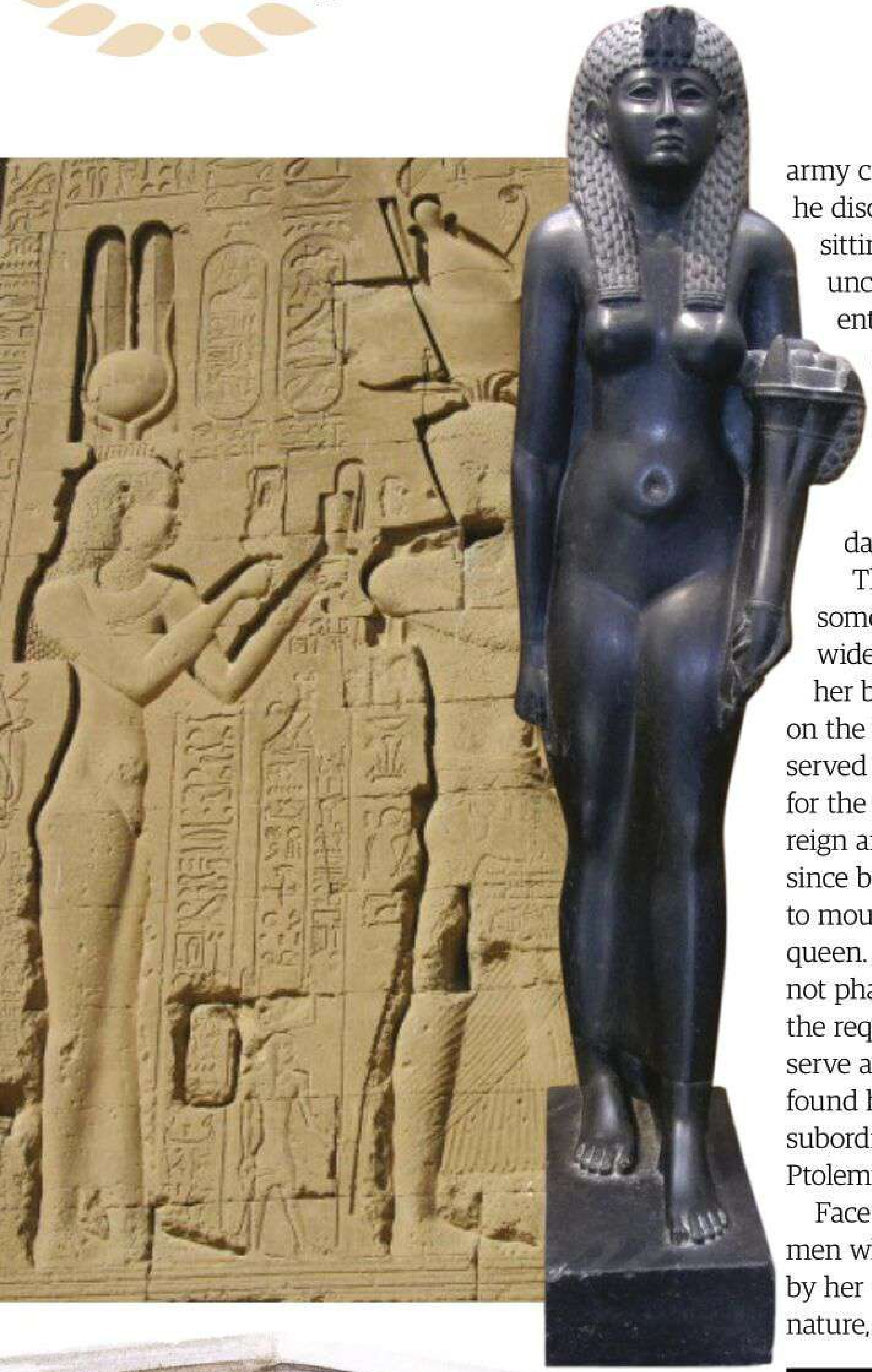
> “The princess was clever and quick-witted”

CLEOPATRA

69-30 BCE

Brief Bio

As the last active pharaoh of Ptolemaic Egypt, Cleopatra had to contend with Julius Caesar during her reign. Self-styled as a reincarnation of the goddess Isis, Cleopatra was later challenged by Octavian after Caesar’s assassination. Her consort, Mark Antony, lost the Battle of Actium and committed suicide. Cleopatra proceeded to follow suit.



army courtesy of the statesman Aulus Gabinius, he discovered his oldest daughter Berenice sitting on the throne. Displaying the brutal and uncompromising ferocity that ran through his entire family, he had his daughter summarily executed. He then proceeded to reclaim the throne, from which he ruled until his death in 51 BCE. The crown and all the debts that he had amassed suddenly became the property of his oldest surviving daughter, Cleopatra.

The 18 year old was not - as some expected - a naïve, wide-eyed child torn from her books to rule a kingdom on the brink of war. She had served as consort to her father for the final few years of his reign and all her education since birth had been designed to mould her into a capable queen. Queen, that was; not king, not pharaoh. Cleopatra was cursed by the requirement of all Egyptian queens to serve alongside a dominant male co-ruler and so found herself burdened with the task of being a subordinate co-regent to her ten-year-old brother, Ptolemy XIII.

Faced with a regency council full of ambitious men who ruled in her brother's stead and led by her own ruthless, impatient and intelligent nature, Cleopatra pushed her brother-husband into the background and established herself as sole monarch of the country. This was dangerous; the Alexandrian courtiers swarmed over the young, impressionable king, filling his head with whispers of sole rule and the dangers of his older sister. If Cleopatra had been more patient and attentive, she could perhaps have trained a capable and obedient co-ruler in him, one who would have aided her rule, instead of bringing it crashing down. But that was simply not the Ptolemy way, and she was a Ptolemy in every sense of the word - daring, ambitious and deadly. She dropped her brother's image from coins and erased his name from official documents. With her skill, drive and cunning she was perfect for rule; in her mind she deserved Egypt and wasn't prepared to share it.

The early years of her reign would be testing, as not only was the country still struggling under the father's debts, but years of infrequent floods of the Nile had led to widespread famine. Over her shoulder Cleopatra could feel the ever-looming and rapidly expanding threat of Rome, and with a weak Egyptian army, her fertile land was ripe for the picking. As hungry peasants flooded into the cities, Cleopatra's popularity plummeted, and her repeated decisions that seemed designed to please Rome at Egypt's expense reminded the bitter population of her despised father.

> She had four children by two fathers - Caesar and Mark Antony - but only one, Cleopatra Selene, made it to adulthood.

A husband & two lovers

Ptolemy XIII Theos Philopator

Macedonian, 62-47 BCE

How did they get together?

The marriage between Ptolemy and his sister was arranged, as was the tradition with Egyptian royalty.

Was it true love?

Considering their joint rule erupted into a brutal civil war, we can assume there was little love lost between the siblings. There is no evidence they consummated their marriage.

How did it end?

Ptolemy was forced to flee Alexandria when the forces of Caesar and his sister-wife Cleopatra claimed victory. He reportedly drowned attempting to cross the Nile when fleeing.

Julius Caesar

Roman, 100-44 BCE

How did they get together?

Cleopatra and her brother both needed Caesar's support. Cleopatra met with Caesar before their scheduled meeting and managed to sway his vote. Her methods can be left to the imagination.

Was it true love?

Although the union was initially spawned from mutual political gain and the two were forbidden by Roman law to marry, Cleopatra seemed to stay loyal to Caesar and had his child.

How did it end?

This love affair was cut short when Caesar was assassinated on the Ides of March.

Mark Antony

Roman, 83-30 BCE

How did they get together?

Antony summoned Cleopatra to see if she would hold true in her promised support during the war against the Parthians. She reportedly charmed him during this meeting, perhaps much the same way she had Caesar.

Was it true love?

Although it may have been borne out of political agendas, the two had three children together, and Antony risked everything to be with his Egyptian queen.

How did it end?

After the ill-fated Battle of Actium, Antony committed suicide upon mistakenly hearing Cleopatra was dead, and she quickly followed suit.

In the middle of this political turmoil, Cleopatra found herself facing a familiar rival. Her brother was back and, aided by his many guardians and regents, was now a vicious and ruthless king who was not afraid to wipe her from the land and from history. He completely erased his sister's name from all official documents and backdated his monarchy, claiming sole rule since his father's death. With her popularity and reputation already in tatters, the disgraced queen fled the city of her birth before an angry mob could storm the palace and inflict upon her the same grisly fate as so many of her greedy and ill-fated predecessors.

Having lost not only the support of her people but also the land she so strongly believed was hers to rule, Cleopatra escaped to Syria with a small band of loyal supporters. Fuelled by outrage at her brother, and even more so at the advisors who had crafted him into a vicious enemy, Cleopatra did not abandon her ambitions, but set about building the army she would need to reclaim her throne. As the female pharaoh amassed her forces in Syria, her young brother, barely 13 years old, became distracted by the ever-pressing Roman civil war. After a humiliating defeat to Caesar in Pharsalus, the Roman military leader Pompey the Great fled to the one place he was assured he could find refuge; his old ally, Egypt.

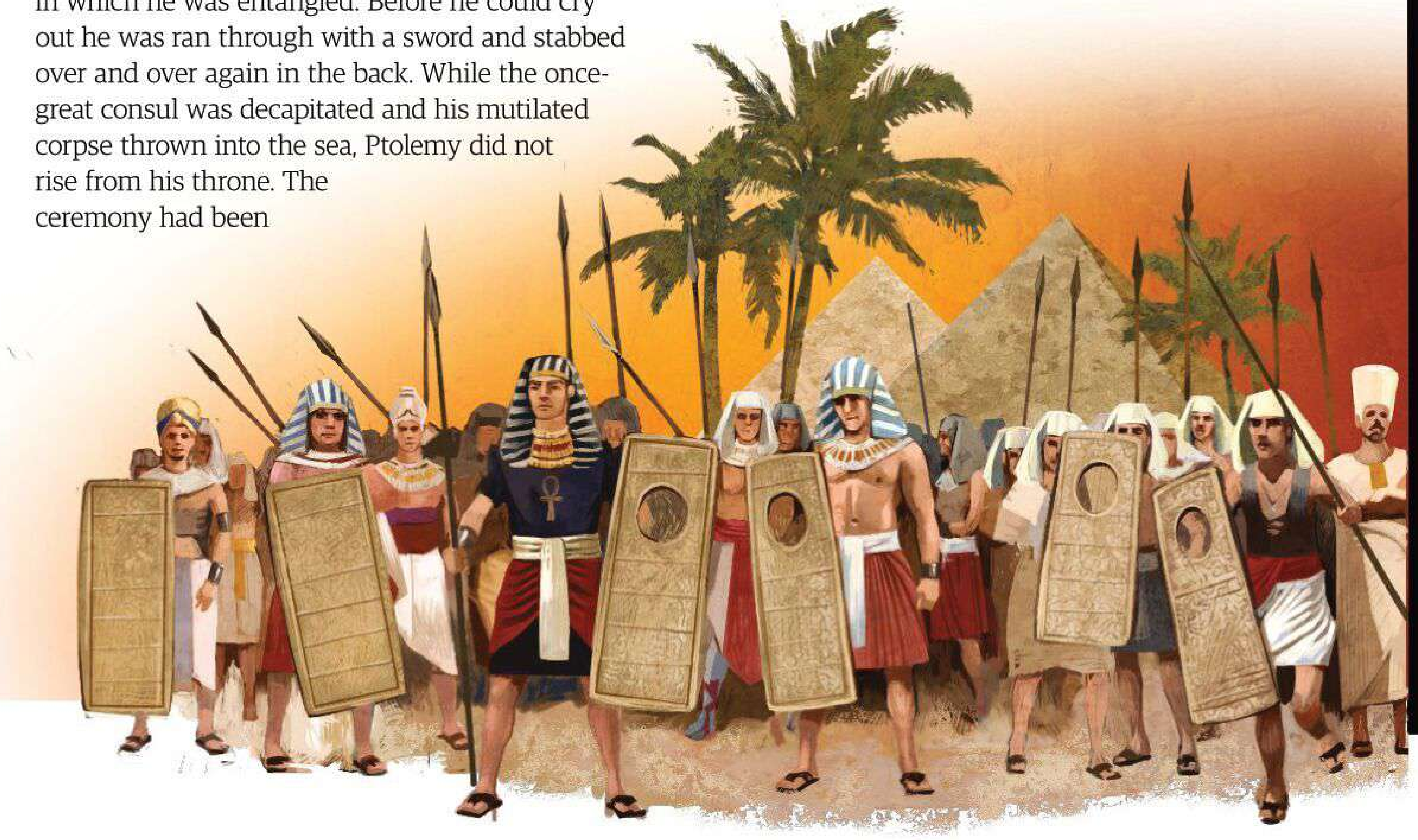
> Cleopatra did not abandon her ambitions, but set about building the army she would need to reclaim her throne.

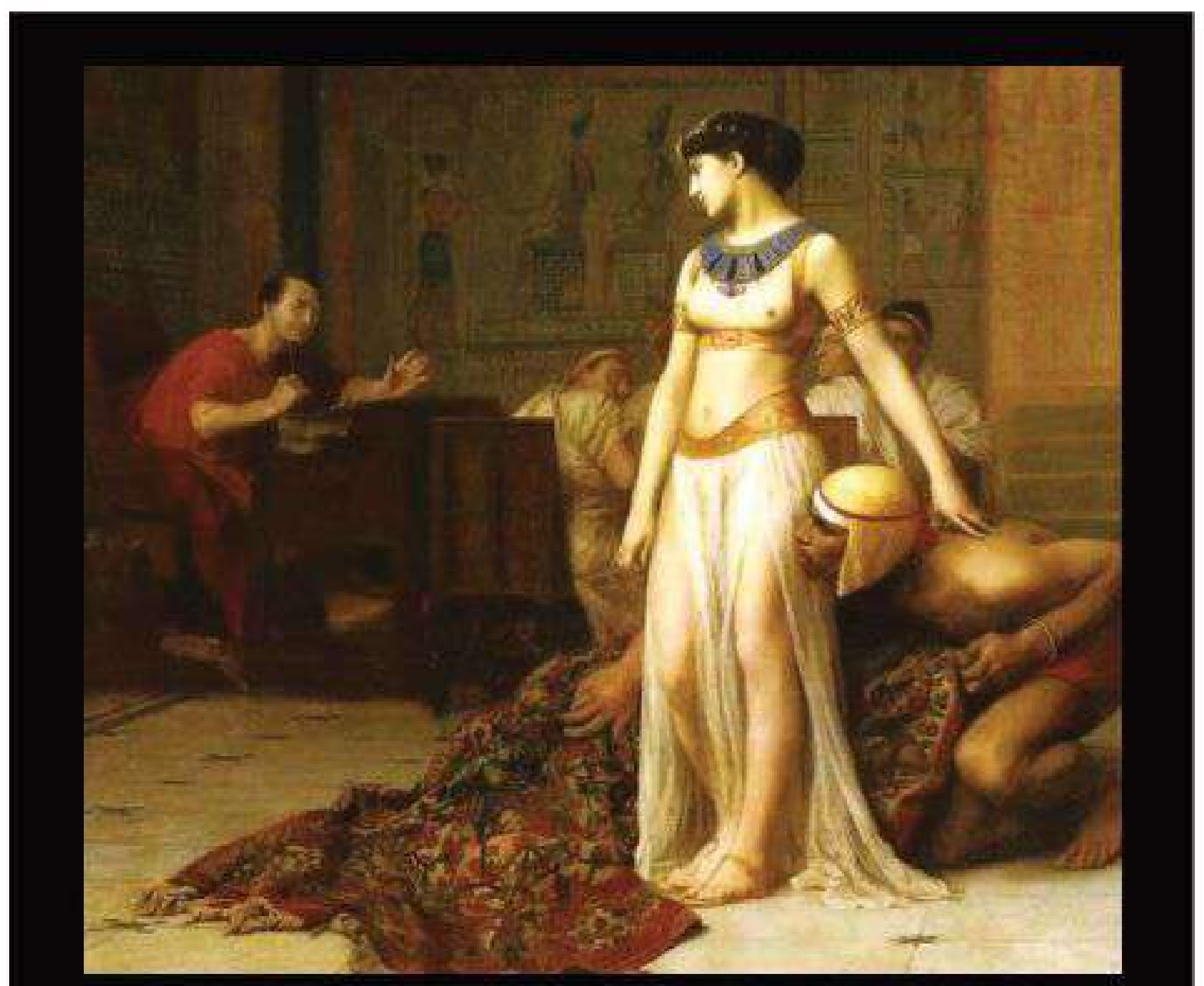
With his wife and children watching nervously from afar, Pompey disembarked his grand ship to board a small fishing boat to the shore. The Egyptian boy pharaoh, Ptolemy, sat on the shore in a throne fashioned specifically for the occasion. He watched Pompey closely, his face guarded and unreadable, but the men around him threw their arms open and, with wide smiles, cried, "Hail, commander!" It was not until the ship reached the shore that Pompey realised the murderous web in which he was entangled. Before he could cry out he was ran through with a sword and stabbed over and over again in the back. While the once-great consul was decapitated and his mutilated corpse thrown into the sea, Ptolemy did not rise from his throne. The ceremony had been a ruse; a rival of Caesar's was more valuable dead than alive.

When Caesar arrived in the harbour of Alexandria four days later, he was presented with the head of his rival. However, in mere moments Ptolemy's advisors realised their mistake, for the Roman general was completely and utterly appalled. He wept loudly and openly before leading his forces to the royal palace in Alexandria. As he observed the local resentment and civil war threatening to break the land in two he made a decision; he needed the wealth that Alexandrian taxes would give him, and the only way of increasing taxes was to establish stability in the city. The sibling rivalry had to end. He summoned Cleopatra and Ptolemy to appear before him. This was easy for Ptolemy who swiftly journeyed to Alexandria, but Cleopatra would have to use all her cunning just to make it into the city alive.

With the harbour blocked by her brother's ships, she slipped away from her troops and travelled in a small boat along the coast in the dead of night. Her journey had been completely and utterly unfitting for a pharaoh of Egypt, a Ptolemy queen; but victory demanded sacrifice and she was confident the streets and waters she was being smuggled down would soon be hers again. It had been a challenge to make it into the palace district, but the real night's work was about to begin - she was about to go face to face with arguably the most powerful man in the known world.

Her brother would bend over backwards, slay Caesar's enemies and kiss his feet for his support, but he was quick to panic, eager to please and terrified of angering Rome. Her brother was a fool. Caesar needed Egypt as much as Egypt needed Rome and she would use that fact to her advantage.





Five myths unravelled

She was smuggled in a rug

The image of a dishevelled and flushed Cleopatra being unrolled from a Persian rug at Caesar's feet after being smuggled into the palace comes from the overzealous pen of Greek biographer Plutarch, but it's difficult to prove this happened. It seems unlikely that Caesar, one of the most powerful men in the world, would have welcomed a suspicious package into his room and even if so, there's no reason for her not to have emerged earlier and made a more elegant entrance.

She was a femme fatale

The idea that Cleopatra flittered between powerful men, wooing and manipulating with no idea of who fathered her children, is the result of an ancient smear campaign run against her by Roman officials. In fact, there's only evidence of her having been with two men: Julius Caesar and Mark Antony.

She was Egyptian

One of the most famous Egyptian pharaohs of all time wasn't Egyptian at all - she was Greek. Her family line is that of Ptolemy, one of the generals of Alexander the Great, and despite her family living in Egypt for over 300 years, she would have been regarded as Greek. Cleopatra was actually rare in that she could speak Egyptian, unlike many of her predecessors.

She wore a fake beard

The concept of female Egyptian queens sporting fake beards comes from the Egyptian belief that the god Osiris had a grand beard, prompting Egyptian pharaohs to do the same to establish themselves as divine beings. But by the time of Cleopatra this tradition had all but died out, and there's no record of her donning a fake beard. In fact, the only female pharaoh known to have worn one is Hatshepsut.

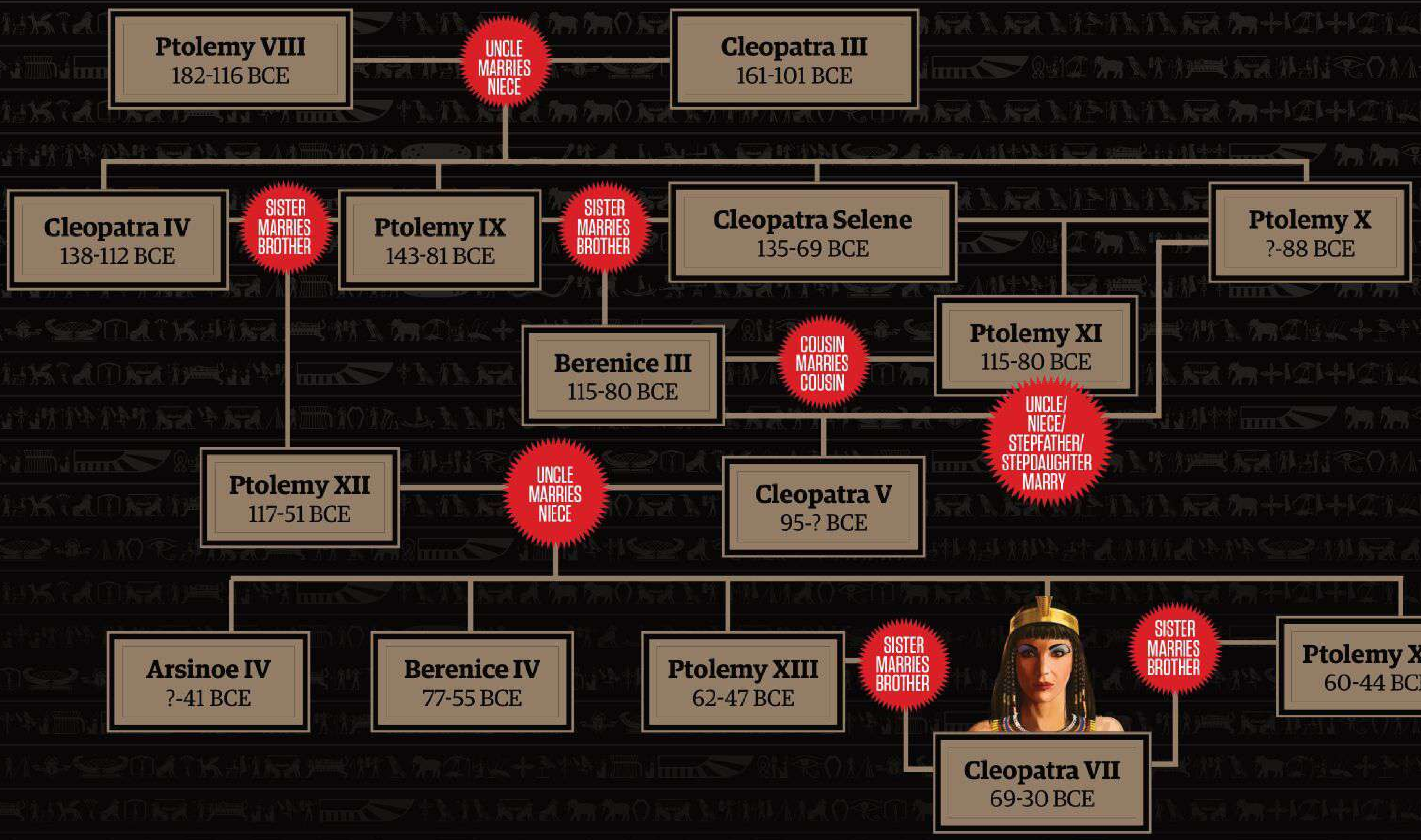
She died from an asp bite

This myth has gained momentum due to paintings of Cleopatra holding a snake to her bosom as she passes away. However, the accounts of this event are in some doubt, mainly because an asp will not cause a quick death as Cleopatra's was reported to be. It is more likely she drank a combination of poisons. The idea that the asp bit her breast is certainly incorrect, as all ancient sources state it bit her on the arm.

All in the family

Follow Cleopatra's family tree and discover just how close-knit the Ptolemies really were

The Ptolemies of Egypt could trace their ancestry to Ptolemy I Soter, a Greek general of Alexander the Great who became ruler of Egypt in 323 BCE. After Alexander's death, his most senior generals divided his vast territory between themselves. Completely oblivious to the dangers of interbreeding, it became customary for the Ptolemies to marry their brothers and sisters. It was convenient for them as not only did it ensure queens could be trained for their role from birth, but also established them as an elite, untouchable class far removed from the masses, similar to the revered Egyptian gods who married their sisters.


Ptolemy VIII 182-116 BCE
UNCLE MARRIES NIECE
Cleopatra III 161-101 BCE
Cleopatra IV 138-112 BCE
SISTER MARRIES BROTHER
Ptolemy IX 143-81 BCE
SISTER MARRIES BROTHER
Cleopatra Selene 135-69 BCE
Ptolemy X ?-88 BCE
Berenice III 115-80 BCE
COUSIN MARRIES COUSIN
Ptolemy XI 115-80 BCE
UNCLE/ NIECE/ STEPFATHER/ STEPDAUGHTER MARRY
Ptolemy XII 117-51 BCE
UNCLE MARRIES NIECE
Cleopatra V 95-? BCE
Arsinoe IV ?-41 BCE
Berenice IV 77-55 BCE
Ptolemy XIII 62-47 BCE
SISTER MARRIES BROTHER
SISTER MARRIES BROTHER
Ptolemy XIV 60-44 BCE
Cleopatra VII 69-30 BCE

She would not wait to bow and plead her case alongside a child, she was going to speak to the Roman general that night. She sneaked into the palace and managed to find her way into Caesar's private chamber.

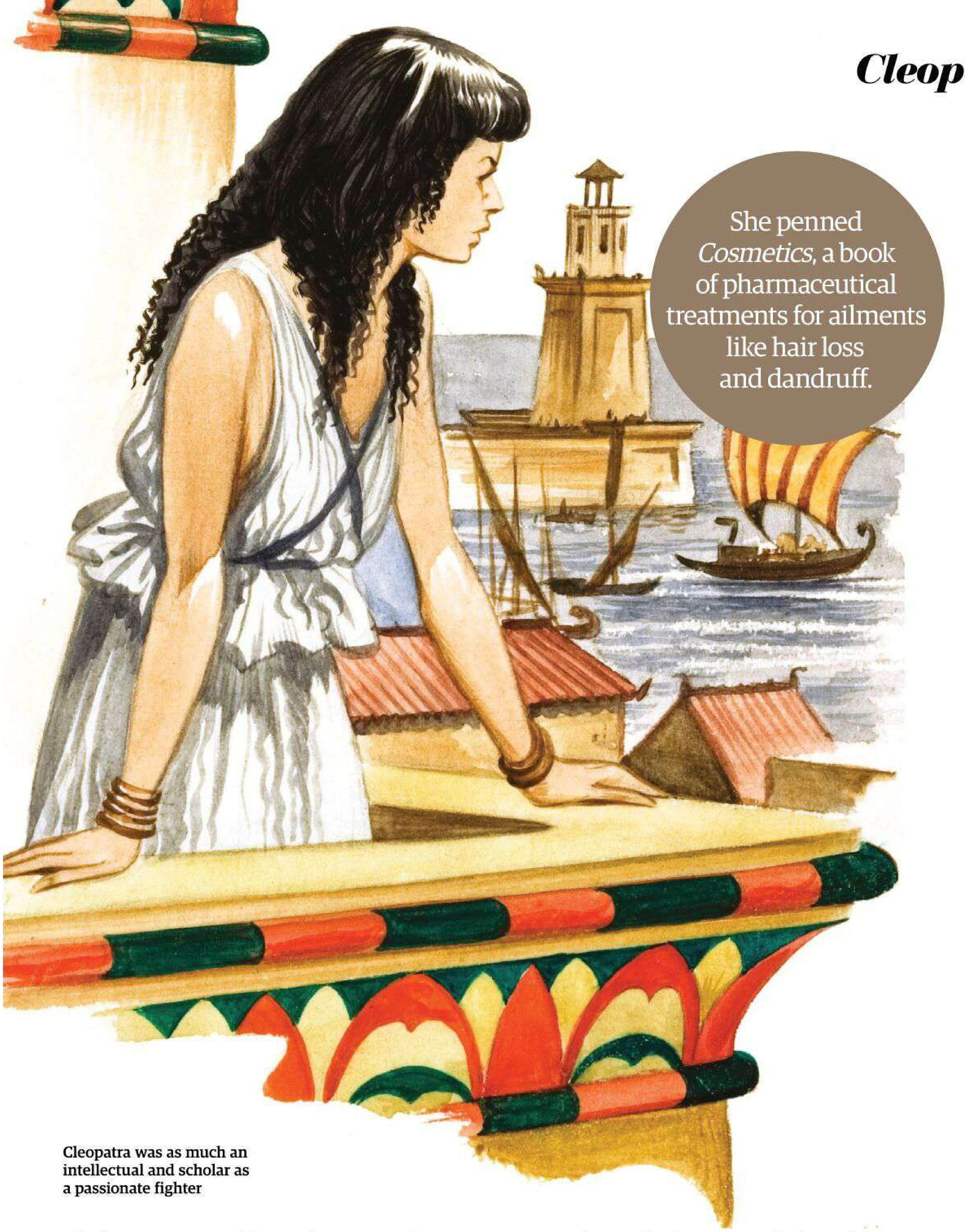
The 'dictator in perpetuity', as he would come to be known in Rome, towered over the small woman; she would have to crane her head to look him in the eye, she realised instantly. He was far older than the young, bold Egyptian queen and his receding hairline was poorly disguised. The general was past his physical prime, but he had just won his greatest victory. This was her first time gazing upon the Roman celebrity known the world over, but this was also the first time he was facing her. Her brother was a child, a mere puppet pharaoh on strings, dancing to the pulls of his corrupt advisors, but she had been granted all the charm, intelligence and ambition of her forefathers. She would steal Caesar and Rome's support while her brother slept; her charisma would succeed where her brother's sword had failed.

Cleopatra's image on a silver coin showed her to have a hooked nose

The young Ptolemy XIII awoke the next day, not expecting his dangerous older sister to have even made it to the palace. When he discovered that not only was she there, but had also seduced Caesar overnight into joining her cause, it was the final straw. Screaming in desperation, he fled from the palace, tore his crown from his head and fell to his knees. His sister had done it again. She was completely and utterly impossible to get rid off and, even as the crowd surged forward in protest, Caesar could not be swayed. The siblings would rule Egypt together, just as their father had intended. Rome had spoken.

The apparent peace did not last long. Already poisoned by the ambitious whispers that had fed his youth, Ptolemy joined with his rebellious sister Arsinoe IV. Between them they amassed an army large enough to challenge Cleopatra and Caesar's forces in Egypt. The country they fought for would pay the price, and in December of 48 BCE the famous stone city of Alexandria was set alight, destroying not only the lives of hundreds of citizens, but also the world-famous library that housed countless priceless manuscripts. When Caesar's reinforcements poured into the city from Pergamum, Ptolemy's forces were finally defeated. The young and impetuous king tried to flee across the Nile in an overcrowded boat, but his vessel sank, dragging him and his elaborate, heavy golden armour down with it.

One Ptolemy was dead, but another still lived. Ptolemy XIV, Cleopatra's 13-year-old brother, became her husband and co-ruler immediately after her brother's death. She might have had Caesar's support, but tradition was still tradition



Cleopatra was as much an intellectual and scholar as a passionate fighter

She penned *Cosmetics*, a book of pharmaceutical treatments for ailments like hair loss and dandruff.

and a lone woman could not rule Egypt. As for Caesar, he had put in place a reliable partnership and Egypt was, for all intents and purposes, a Roman territory. In a lavish display of the new union, a fleet of Roman and Egyptian ships sailed down the Nile accompanied by the grand royal barge where Cleopatra and Caesar sat together.

Egypt and Rome were united, but Cleopatra still found herself co-ruler to another Ptolemy who would inevitably grow up to be ambitious and treacherous. She could not allow another brother to be swayed by advisors and driven against her. As long as Ptolemy XIV lived, her rule was threatened. She wasn't a fool, she knew Egypt would never accept a solitary female queen, but there was a technicality that would ensure her effective sole rule. Her partnership with Caesar had provided more than his political support; she was pregnant and in 47 BCE she gave birth. The gods' will was in her favour – the child was a boy. She named him Caesarion, or 'Little Caesar', and now had an heir. For three years Cleopatra tightened her grip on the Egyptian throne, slowly winning the love of the Alexandrian mobs that had previously screamed for her head. She travelled to Rome with her son and resided in Caesar's country house as heated rumours about the paternity of her son gained speed. She did little to squash them; a possible heir of Caesar was a very powerful tool to have.

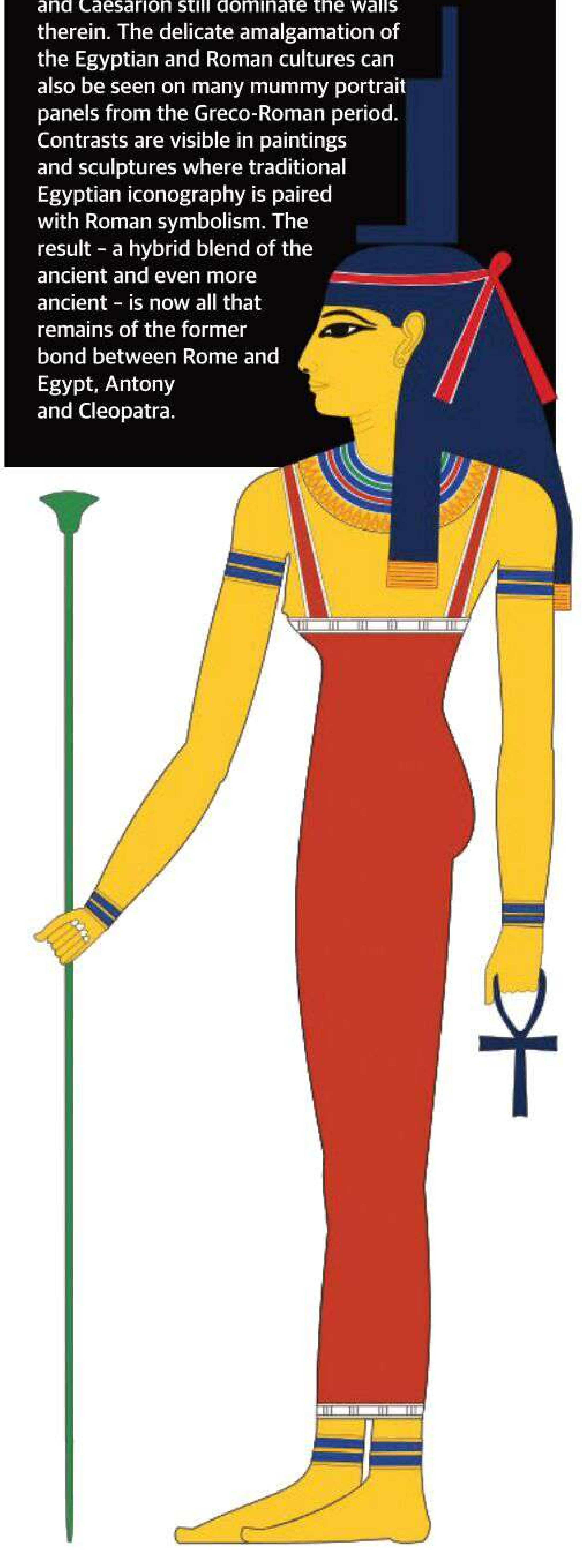
When Caesar was assassinated on 15 March 44 BCE, Cleopatra left Rome and returned to Alexandria. If there was ever a time to act, it was now. Without her powerful Roman lover by her side she needed an ally who could assure her rule, one who wasn't going to lead a rebellion against her. Brothers, she had learned, could not be trusted. Later that year the youngest Ptolemy was found dead, seemingly poisoned. The people's grief was muted; the death of Ptolemies, however young, was not so uncommon in Egypt, and the people had a new pharaoh to replace him: the young Caesarion. Cleopatra had finally done it, she was Egypt's pharaoh, and with her son an infant she was ruling alone in all but name. The power of Egypt was hers.

End of an era

Cleopatra's surviving children were adopted by Octavia. They became Roman citizens and faded quickly into obscurity. Egypt, now a Roman province, was ruled by a prefect. Greek remained the official language. While Alexandria continued to flourish, it became a site of many religious and military uprisings.

In 269 CE, Alexandria was claimed by yet another woman, when Zenobia, the ferocious warrior queen of Palmyra, conquered Egypt. Zenobia, who was an admirer of Cleopatra, was quick to behead her detested Roman foes. She ruled Egypt until 274, before she herself was taken hostage by the Roman Emperor Aurelian. In an ironic twist of fate, Zenobia appeared in golden chains during Aurelian's Triumph in Rome.

The legacy of Greco-Roman Egypt still survives. It can be seen in a series of magnificent temples that were built along the River Nile. These include the Temple of Hathor at Dendera, where fabulous images of Cleopatra and Caesarion still dominate the walls therein. The delicate amalgamation of the Egyptian and Roman cultures can also be seen on many mummy portrait panels from the Greco-Roman period. Contrasts are visible in paintings and sculptures where traditional Egyptian iconography is paired with Roman symbolism. The result – a hybrid blend of the ancient and even more ancient – is now all that remains of the former bond between Rome and Egypt, Antony and Cleopatra.



Voice of Rome

Strategist, philosopher and man of the people, Cicero's dramatic career coincided with the fall of a republic and the rise of an empire

Marcus Tullius Cicero peeked out of his covered litter to check if he was being followed. He was sweating, his heart was pounding and he looked nervous. It was not the first time he was on the run from the authorities. The Roman Republic he had dedicated his whole life to protecting had betrayed him once again, and this time there would be no reprieve. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw two armed soldiers strolling towards the slaves carrying the litter. They called him by name and told the slaves to stop; Cicero knew he had only moments to live. He regarded the men solemnly and declared: "There is nothing proper about what you are doing, soldier, but do try to kill me properly." He bowed his head out and waited for the killing blow.

Cicero was more than aware of his enemies. At the consular elections in 63 BCE he wore armour underneath his toga.

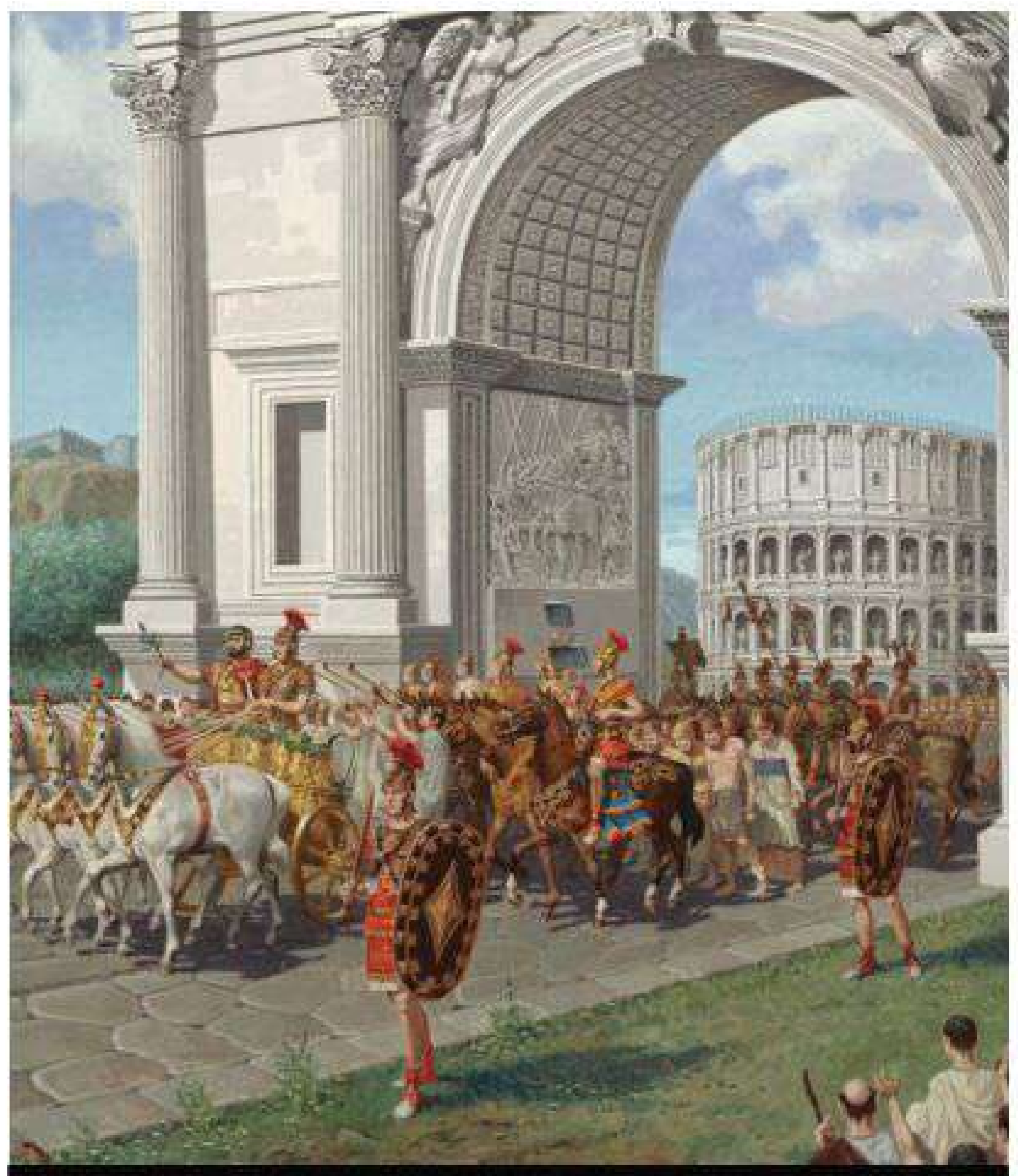
With no influence within the senate, forum or any connections to the patronage network of the Patrician, Cicero's family languished in obscurity before he came of age. Residing in the town of Arpinum, Cicero attended schools to improve his lot and his father insisted he should make something of himself within Roman politics. He learned Greek and studied the philosophies and teachings of Plato and Archimedes; in Roman culture this knowledge was required to be considered capable of leading Rome's political and military elite. He was a diligent student, even visiting Greece to discover the secrets of their philosophical ideals. As he gained a reputation in the provinces as a skilled litigator, he also wooed the crowds gathered at public court hearings with his oratory skills, and became famous as a man who could win any legal case he took on.

Representing landowners and provincial merchants gave Cicero a firm understanding of the law but wasn't enough for his burgeoning ego. Therefore, when he was asked to prosecute a case involving Gaius Verres, a greedy Roman governor who had oppressed and intimidated the people of Sicily, he saw an opportunity to ascent to the place where he had always wanted to go; Rome. He was taking an awful risk though as Verres had hired Rome's foremost lawyer to defend him, Quintus Hortalus. If the young and inexperienced Cicero lost against him he would be finished. He diligently prepared his case, spending hours working on every inflection of his voice and action of his body to make sure he came across as the best orator ever heard. He knew only the best would do, as the case was going to the Forum in Rome, the centre of imperial Roman justice.

The preparation paid off. Not only did he win the case, he was guaranteed a place as a magistrate in the Roman cursus honorum, one of the most respected levels of government. He continued to fly through the ranks of public office, thriving on the adventure that encompassed life while working high-profile cases. He fell in love with the glamour of addressing the people from the plinths of the Roman Forum.

Public speaking was one of the finest skills a Roman citizen could have, and Cicero was considered its greatest orator.

"The Roman Republic he had dedicated his whole life to protecting had betrayed him once again"



Only the senate could grant a triumph, which held great esteem and was coveted by all of Rome's great men

Life in Cicero's time

Rome the conqueror

While Rome's power was not at its height during Cicero's lifetime, it was still a dominant force in the Italian peninsula and beyond. Its influence stretched from the muddy fields of Gaul, modern-day France, to the grain-rich plains of the Egyptian Nile.

Slaves and free Romans

Roman society was based around the distinction between Romans who had the right to own property and influence the political system and slaves who had no rights at all. Slaves were used in every part of Roman life, from domestic servants to labourers in mines. As was expected for a man of his standing, Cicero himself owned a number of slaves.

The Roman Republic

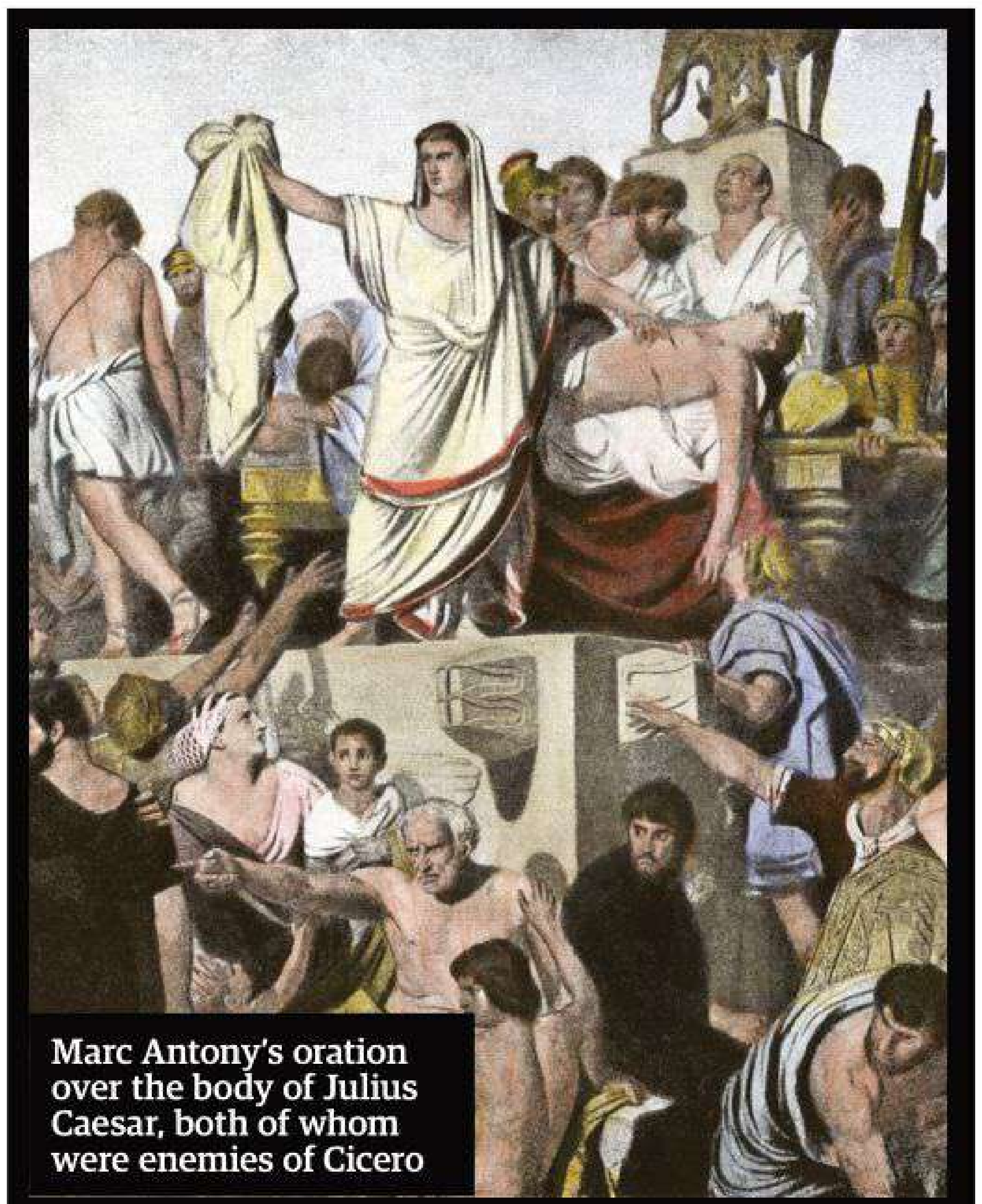
Before the great emperors of Rome stood the Roman Republic, a political system dominated by the senate and its consul leaders. While the Republic looked democratic and free on the surface, in reality only the elite were allowed to serve and the whole political process was shamelessly corrupt.

Class struggle

Class division was split between the Patrician, the ruling elite, and the Plebeian, all other Romans. While the ruling families maintained control over the senate throughout this period they lived in constant fear of the ferrocity and fickleness of the plebeian "mob", which had to be appeased regularly.

The gods and man

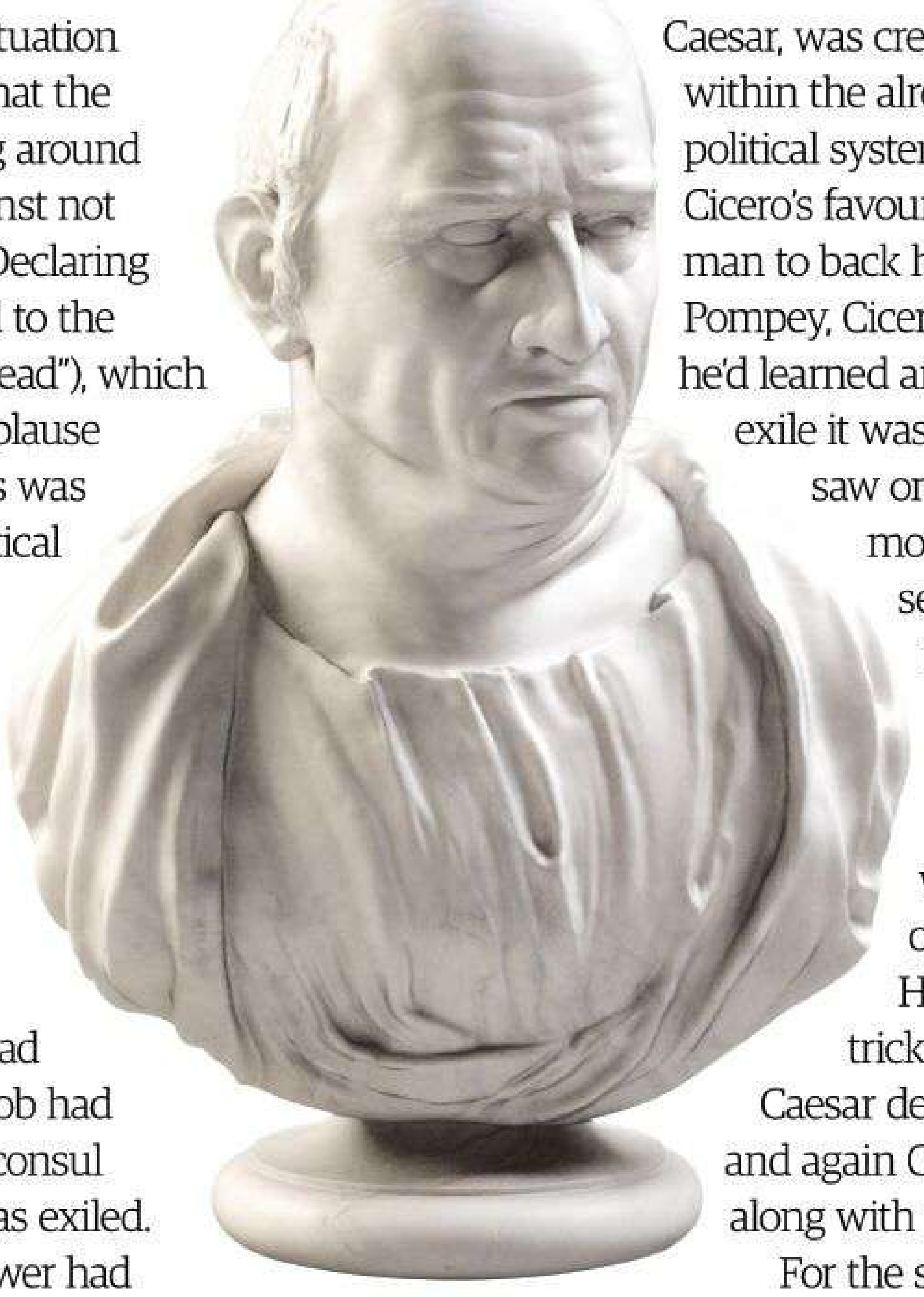
Religion played an important part in the daily lives of Romans and their pantheon of gods and goddesses were seen to have a direct influence on the lives of Rome's citizens. Strange cults and colourful religious ceremonies were a constant feature of the bustling city streets.



Marc Antony's oration over the body of Julius Caesar, both of whom were enemies of Cicero

Vying for power

Despite Rome's apparent stability throughout this period, the Roman Republic and its political system was going through immense upheaval. The senate was becoming unable to curtail the ambitions of powerful Roman leaders who commanded vast armies. One of them, Gaius Julius Caesar, had been ruling Rome as joint consul with Pompey Magnus but feared a plot concocted by Pompey to overthrow his authority within the senate. In short order, their conflict threw the whole of Rome and its dependencies into a disruptive conflict that pitted Romans against Romans. As this was happening the senate struggled to maintain a role for itself within the city and was constantly being overruled by men like Caesar who was holding a lethal trump card – an army capable of sacking the city. Public officials often found themselves behind developing events. When Caesar was assassinated, Mark Antony became the dominant force within the city. When Caesar's adopted son Octavian, who also called himself Caesar, took over the city and Antony fled, Antony's supporters found themselves on shifting sand. For senators like Cicero, this was a dangerous time and picking the wrong side during these insurrections could spell doom if the opposing side regained power. There was also the constant threat of political assassination, a method not uncommon in Roman society for removing political enemies.



Cicero reached the peak of any Roman's career when he was elected consul, the highest office attainable. As consul he utilised his oratory skills to put down a conspiracy of rebellion against him, convincing the mob to condemn the men involved as traitors. He condemned them to death, reasoning that the situation was dangerous enough and that the tide of public opinion swelling around him would be protection against not affording the accused a trial. Declaring his verdict he spoke one word to the crowd: "*Vixerunt*" ("They are dead"), which was received by rapturous applause from the people. In reality this was a risky tactic: in the cruel political game of Rome, operating outside the law in public office spawned enemies and sure enough, when his tenure ended, a group of political enemies introduced a law punishing those who had condemned Roman citizens without trial. Cicero had been outmanoeuvred. The mob had turned against him, the new consul wasn't sympathetic and he was exiled.

Cicero's dramatic rise to power had been cut short. He wrote at length to his noble friend Titus Atticus about his woe: "Your pleas have prevented me from committing suicide. But what is there to live for? Don't blame me for complaining. My afflictions surpass any of those you have heard earlier." He couldn't see how he would ever command power again.

So, in 57 BCE, when Roman leadership changed once again and Cicero was given a reprieve it was as if his prayers had been answered. He boarded a ship from his Greek residence and prepared to re-enter the cut-throat world of Roman politics.

All was not well in the Republic on his return home. Political upheaval revolving around two friends turned rivals, Pompey Magnus and Julius Caesar, was creating dangerous divisions within the already fractious Roman political system. While Caesar courted Cicero's favour, looking for a respectable man to back his grievousness against Pompey, Cicero decided to play safe. If he'd learned anything during his years in exile it was to back a winner when he saw one. Pompey had more men, more support in the senate and seemed to hold the support of Rome's mob. He threw in his lot with Pompey as the man who would see the Republic restored and reward Cicero with power and influence once Caesar was defeated.

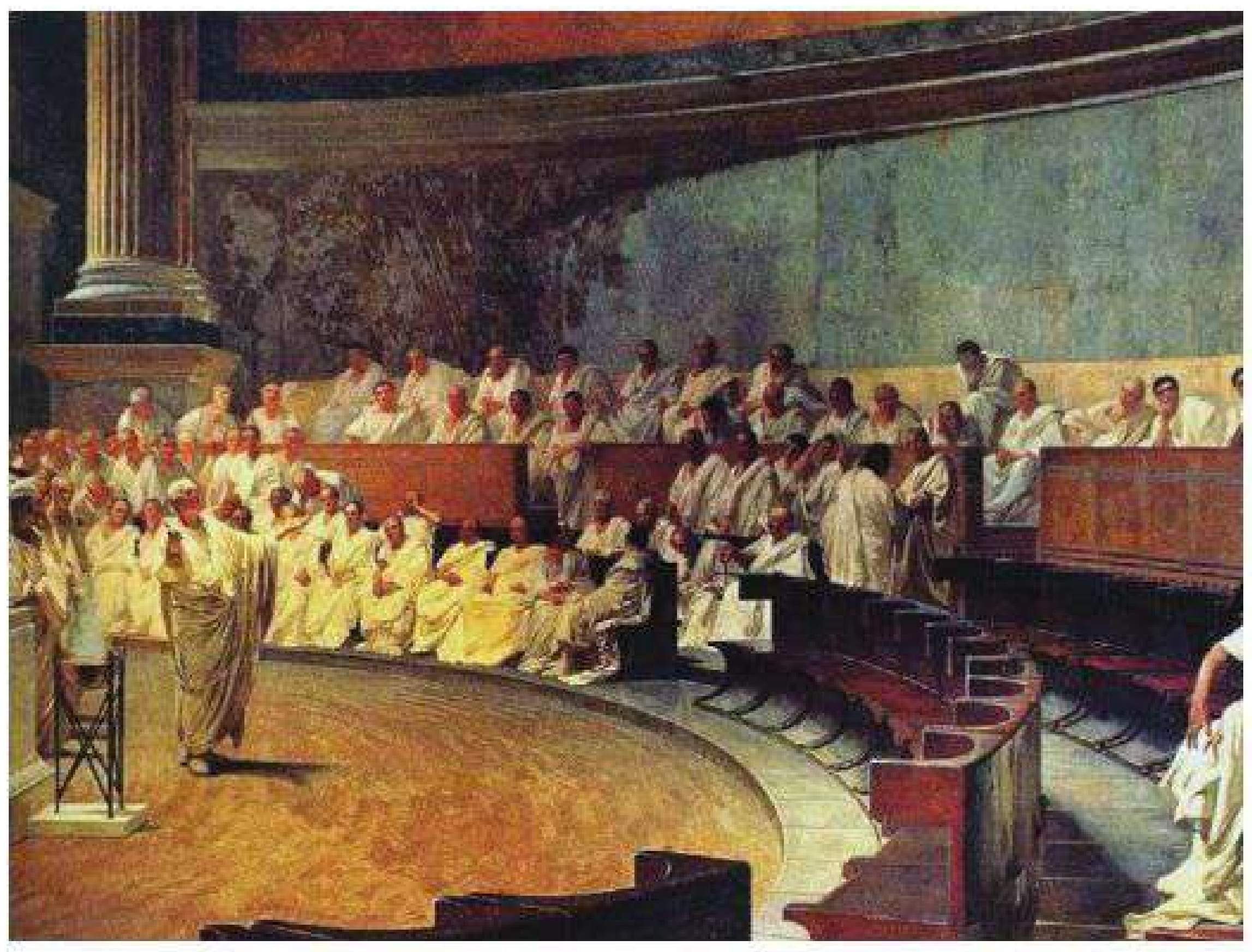
However, fate played a cruel trick on Cicero. Defying the odds, Caesar defeated Pompey in open battle and again Cicero was exiled from Rome, along with Pompey's dilapidated forces.

For the second time Cicero was on the run from his homeland and his future looked bleak. His return to Rome came after Caesar, looking to shore up a very unsettled senate, decided to pardon him. Instead of punishment, Caesar praised Cicero, commenting on his oratory skills: "It is more important to have greatly extended the frontiers of the Roman spirit than the frontiers of the Roman empire." But flattery did not sway Cicero over to Caesar's side and what he found when he returned to Rome affronted

Defining moment

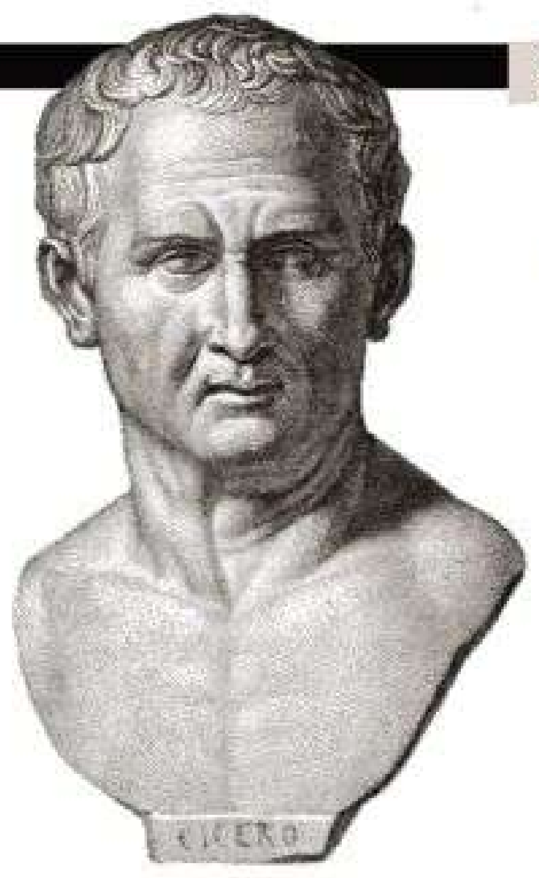
Gaius Verres' case 75 BCE

One of the most celebrated cases of Cicero's career is his prosecution of the corrupt Sicilian governor Gaius Verres, a tyrant who brutalised his Roman subjects. After hearing Cicero's reputation as an excellent orator, the Sicilians petition Cicero to prosecute Verres on their behalf. After some debate, Cicero takes the case to Rome and promptly wins against Verres's expensive lawyer through his superb oratory skills. With the gathered crowd cheering whenever Cicero speaks his relationship with the people is sealed. This early success is the foundation upon which his political career is built.



Timeline

106 BCE



Birth of Cicero
Cicero is born into an equestrian order family in Arpinum, outside of Rome. While his father is a man of means, Cicero's family is not considered part of the ruling elite.
106 BCE

90 BCE

Precursor
Cicero joins the army as a precursor under the leadership of Strabo and Sulla. He serves during the War of Allies between the Republic and several Italian cities.
90 BCE

75 BCE

87 BCE

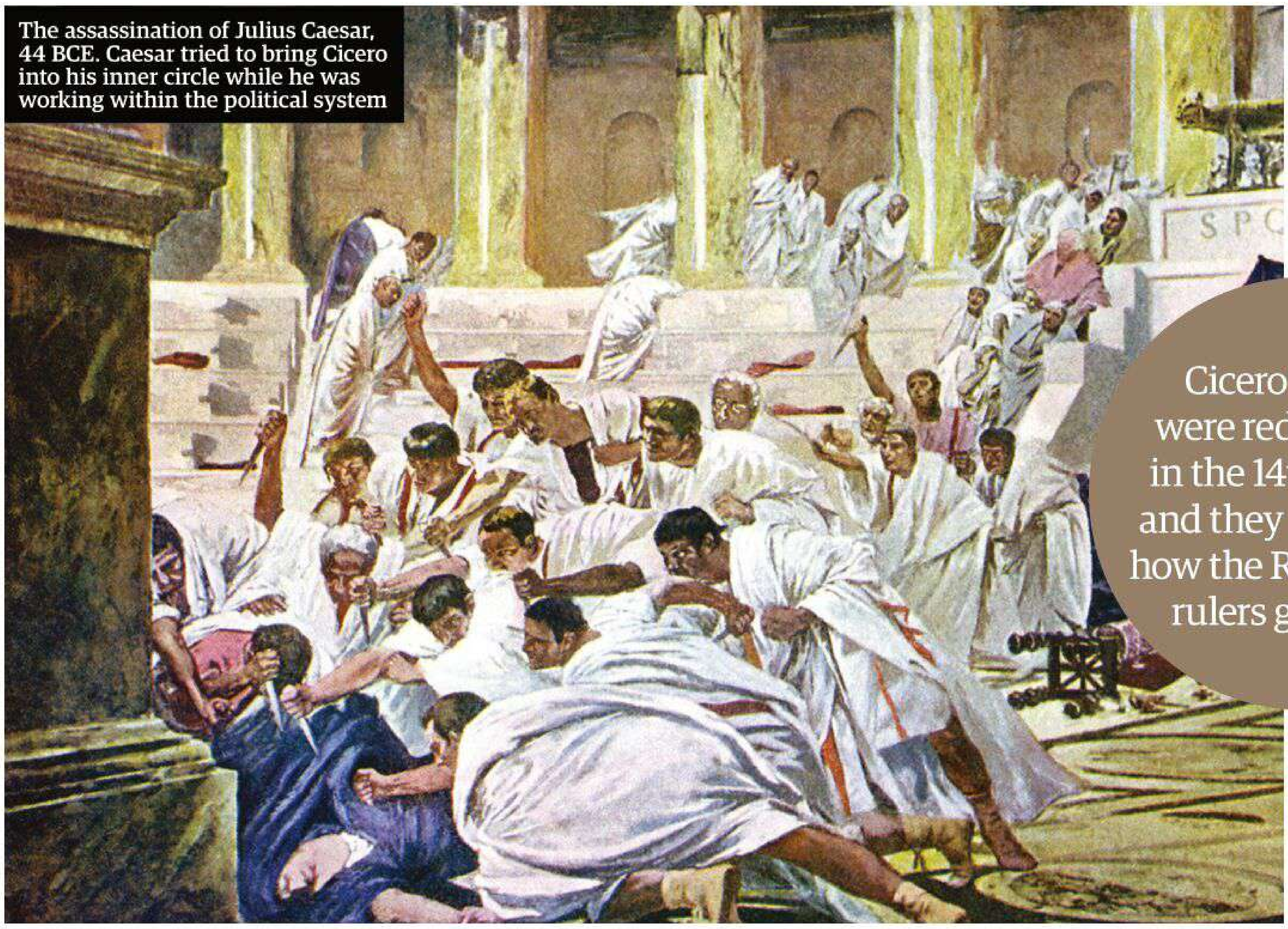
Philosopher
Cicero becomes fascinated by Greek philosophy. Roman society dictates that knowledge of Greek is mandatory for those in power.
87 BCE

66 BCE

Praetor of Rome
Cicero becomes a Praetor and a famous magistrate of the law. Praetor is also a military position, but Cicero shows very little interest in the Roman army.
66 BCE

63 BCE

Real power
Cicero is made consul of the Roman senate, one of the most powerful positions in Rome. The consul is leader of the senate and has full veto power. While consul, he uncovers a conspiracy to overthrow him by Catiline. The decision to condemn the traitors to death without a trial will come back to haunt him.
63 BCE



The assassination of Julius Caesar, 44 BCE. Caesar tried to bring Cicero into his inner circle while he was working within the political system

Cicero's works were rediscovered in the 14th century and they influenced how the Renaissance rulers governed.

"He had made another critical error by trusting the young man who was now calling himself Augustus Caesar"

his sensibilities. Caesar was ruling the Republic like a tyrant, changing tradition to fit his own political needs.

Unsurprisingly, Caesar made many enemies and, in yet another explosion of ruthless violence, Caesar was murdered on the senate floor during the religious festival of the Ides of March. Cicero decided to play this latest development more subtly than the Pompey fiasco. He neither supported nor condemned the assassination in public, although he wrote a private letter to one of Brutus's supporters, saying: "How I could wish that you had invited me to that glorious banquet on the Ides of March."

With Caesar dispatched and Brutus's conspirators looking for a man to rally around, Cicero once again became a man of power and influence, perhaps only bested in this respect by Mark Antony. Antony's affiliation with Caesar was well known, and a source of intense jealously for less-connected men like Cicero. Cicero regarded Antony as little more than a political opportunist, profiting on the death of his master. He publicly denounced him, writing orations against him and making scandalous remarks about his sexuality to friends. But Antony held an army at his command, which outweighed the mere words of a skilled orator. It appeared as if Antony was set to stay in Rome until Octavian, Julius's adopted son and heir, returned to the capital. Cicero supported him as a liberator from the brutish Antony, claiming that he was a man of honour, and endorsed his fight against Antony. In a pitched battle, Octavian defeated Antony, who fled to Gaul. Again, Cicero made a judgement call and assessed that Antony was finished, his flight from Rome retribution for his brash behaviour. But Cicero was proved wrong once more. Surprisingly, Octavian made peace with Antony in order to steal power away from the hostile senate and, along with Marcus Lepidus, declared a Triumvirate – a type of military Junta – to rule Rome.

Cicero did his best to swallow his burning resentment at the destruction of the Republic and ingratiate himself with Octavian, but it was too little, too late. He had made another critical error in judgement by trusting the young man who was now calling himself Augustus Caesar. Suddenly designated a public enemy, Cicero faced two options; stay and face a show trial or run. The man who was later described by Quintilian as "eloquence himself", bolted into the night, with nothing but the toga on his back, hunted by the people he helped bring to power. As he raced for the safety of Greece, one of his brother's slaves betrayed him to Mark Antony's spy and he was apprehended within striking distance of the coast.

In the great marketplace of Rome two armed soldiers strolled up to the front doors of the Forum carrying a large, heavy sack. They opened it and pulled out its contents, a dismembered head and two hands covered in congealed blood. One of the men began attaching the head to the door, forcing the rotting jaw open and pulling out the tongue, pinning it across the putrid skin to make the mouth look as if it was speaking. In a final grotesque display, Cicero's last address to the people was nailed to the Forum for all to see.

Defining moment

Betrayed by Octavian

November 43 BCE

Octavian Caesar, the adopted son and heir apparent to Gaius Julius Caesar, returns to Rome. Cicero makes overtures of friendship to the young man now calling himself Caesar. Mark Antony is forced to flee the city into the mountains. This is a short-lived victory for Cicero and the Republic, as Octavian is unwilling to share power with the "fools" in the senate. He betrays Cicero and makes a separate deal with Antony. With Octavian and Antony now working together, Cicero finds himself out of favour and isolated.

58 BCE

Exiled
After falling out of favour with the new consul and his tribunes, Cicero is forced into exile and retreats to Greek Thessalonica, falling into deep depression.
58 BCE

57 BCE

Return to Rome
Invited to return to Rome by Titus Milo, Cicero eagerly accepts the opportunity to revive his political career in the Republic and returns to Rome.
57 BCE

49 BCE

Outlaw
Cicero finds himself on the wrong side of public opinion by backing Pompey rather than his rival, the popular Gaius Julius Caesar. He is subsequently forced to flee from the city with Pompey's soldiers.
49 BCE

44 BCE

Ides of March
Caesar is murdered on the senate floor by Brutus, a Pompey supporter. While Cicero is not present at the assassination he privately supports Brutus's actions.
44 BCE

43 BCE

Cicero vs. Mark Antony
In the following power vacuum, Cicero and Mark Antony become Rome's dominant figures. Unfortunately, there is little love lost between the two and they frequently clash.
February 43 BCE

43 BCE

Death of an orator
After seeing that Octavian Caesar and Mark Antony have betrayed him and he is now on their "most wanted" list, Cicero flees Rome but is caught and summarily executed.
December 43 BCE

© Corbis; Alamy

Downfall & demise

Learn how Caesar's political decisions lead to his tragic demise and what legacy he left behind

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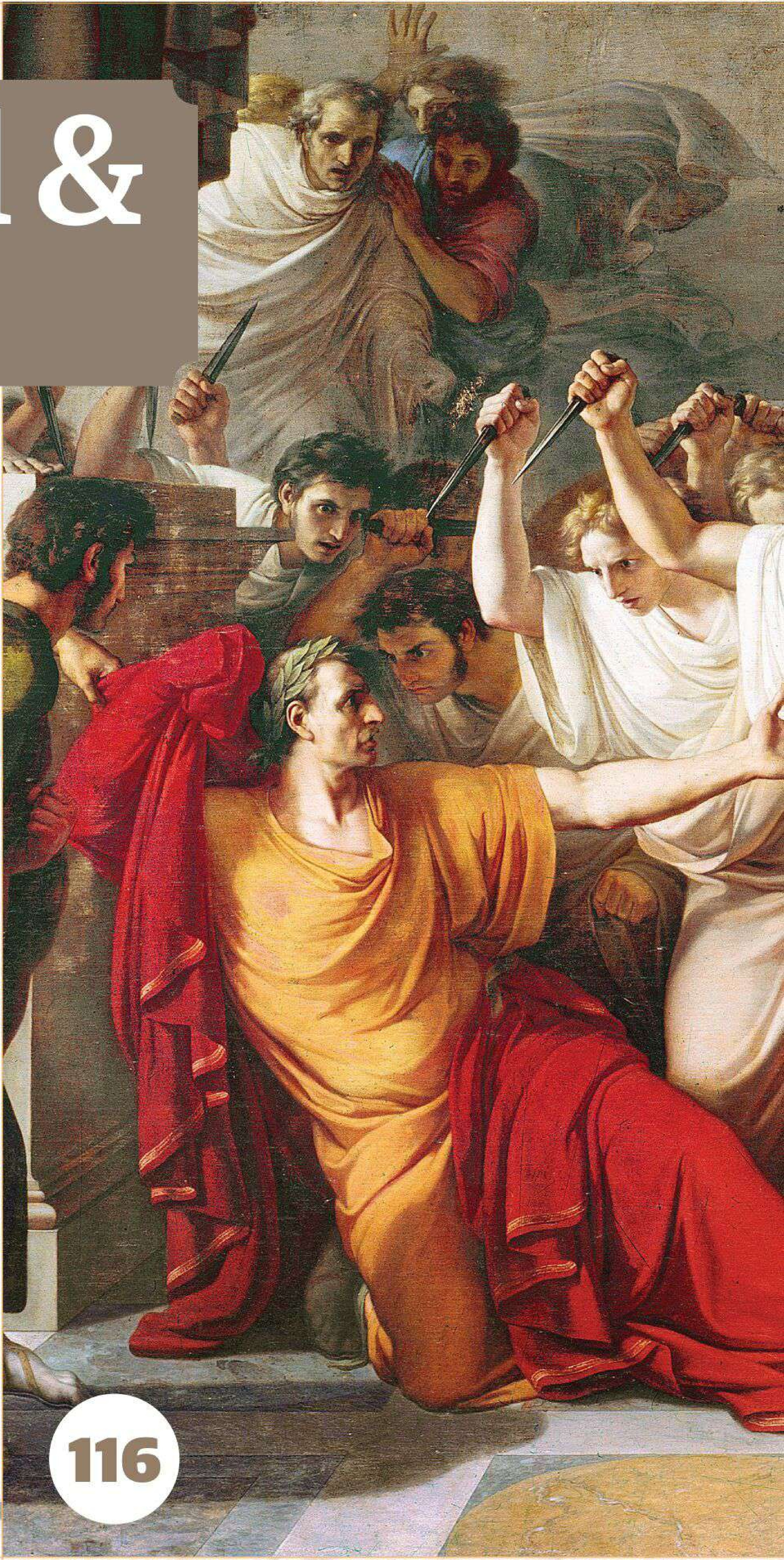
142 **A dictator's enduring legacy**

"For Caesar's foreign enemies and political rivals, he was a narcissistic glory hunter"



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The true Julius Caesar

To the people of Rome Caesar was a hero of the common man, but to his rivals he was a narcissistic glory hunter. What was it about this man that divided opinion so harshly?

Today, Julius Caesar is among the most well-known figures in the history of humanity. He has been portrayed on stage and in film, and the focus of countless books, and he has served as an inspiration to many monumental men and women who have followed him. The mythical status that has developed around Caesar has created an aura of legend. But he was not a figure from myth – he was a man, a real man who lived and breathed, made mistakes, and paid for them. Who was he really? What did his friends, enemies and lovers think about him? And what was it about this man in particular that prompted him to rise out of the masses to obtain this legendary status?

Perhaps the most well-documented aspect of Caesar was his intelligence. The world he grew up in was a brutal one, and there were countless strong, rash and reckless men who were willing to do whatever possible to win, and although intelligence was valued in Rome, there were far fewer who possessed all of these things. Caesar was well-read and educated; he was a very articulate writer, and an even more impressive speaker. Caesar understood, from a relatively early age, the power he could summon with the strength of his words. He gave speeches that roused the hearts of the Roman people, and could compel juries to overturn sentences. Of course, this intelligence manifested in more ways than the ability to talk well. Throughout his military career he was able to outmaneuver his opponents in unexpected ways.

His strategic and military genius meant that time and time again he won battles, and with it the support of his men. Rome loved a victor, and Caesar used his supreme intellect to win battle after battle. One prime example was the Battle of Alesia in which, after following the enemy to the fortified town, he created a siege instead of sacking the city like most would. He created walls and ditches around the city to monitor his enemy within, and also watch for reinforcements and defend his position. It was quick thinking like this that not only gained the respect of his troops, but also won the battles that painted him as Rome's hero. However, as clever as he was, Caesar also had a rather reckless streak. He was, for all his intelligence, an extreme risk-taker. This manifested on the battlefield, in politics and in his personal life. He spent so much money that failure would have resulted in bankruptcy and disgrace. Aged

> It was quick thinking that not only gained the respect of his troops, but also won the battles that painted him as Rome's hero.

As good as he was at winning the public's affection, Caesar's opponents were not fooled by his shows of generosity

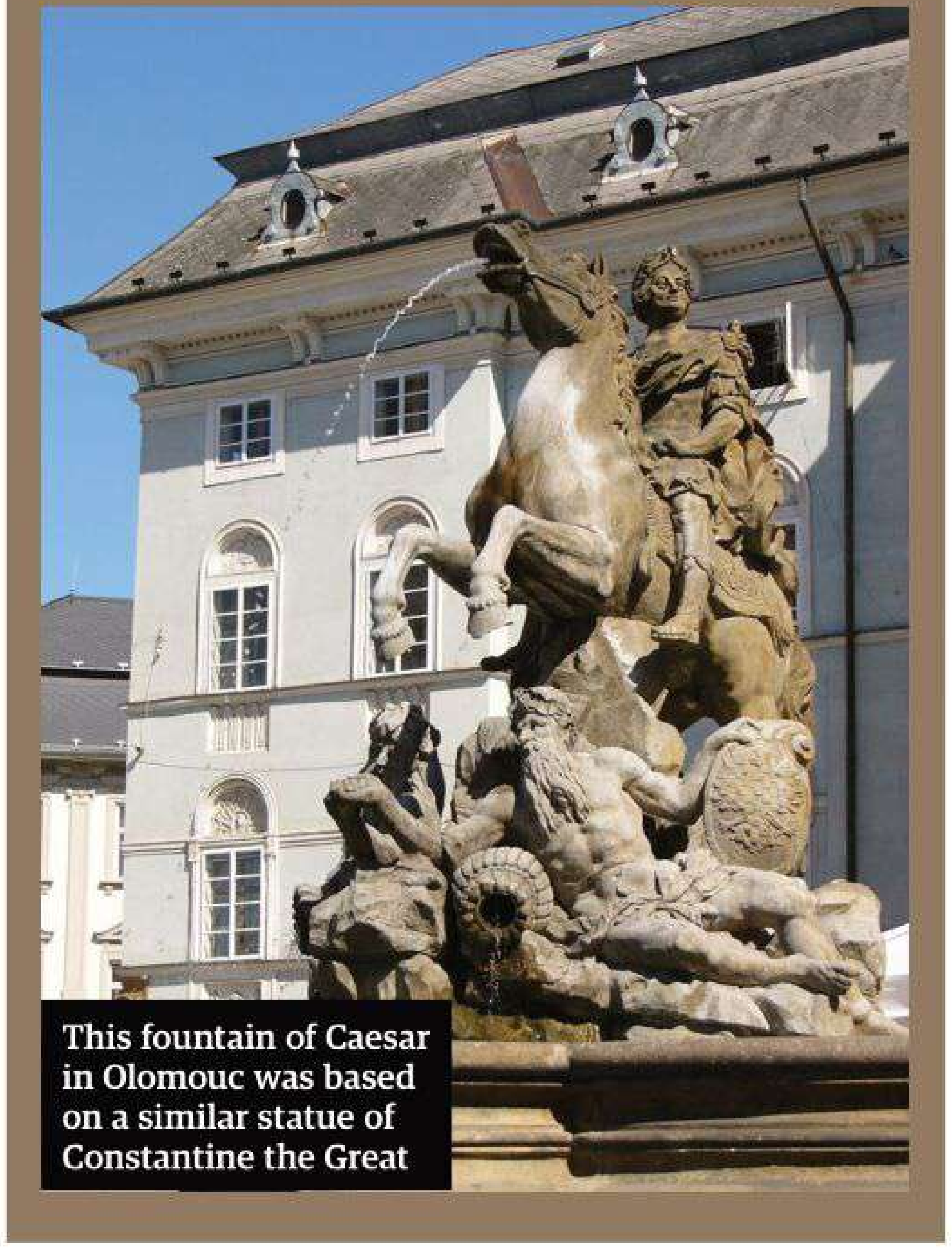
> "His love affair with Cleopatra could have cost him everything he won"

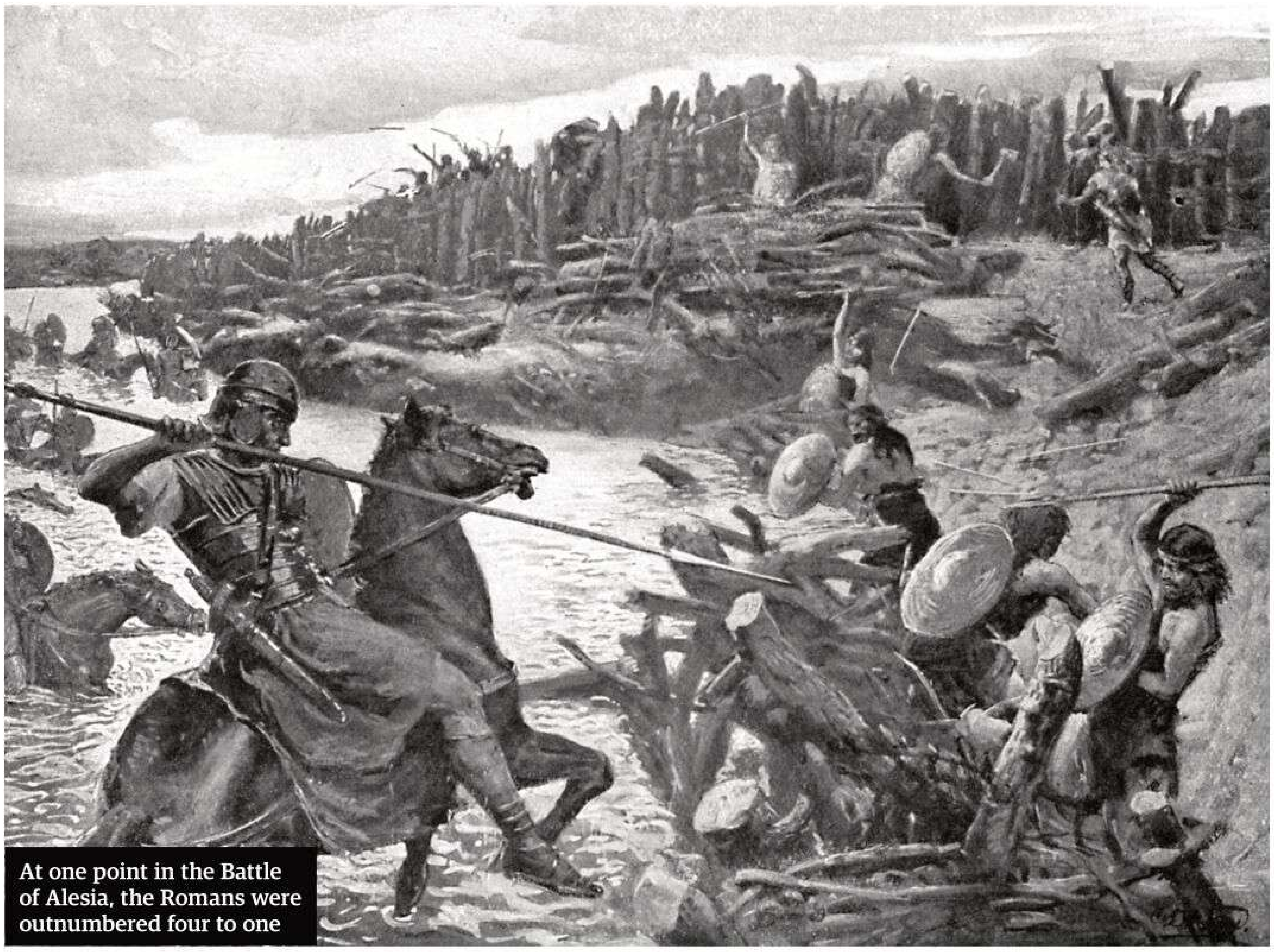
Hero or villain?

Opinions towards Caesar today are even more complex than they were during the time he lived. Perhaps due to his portrayal in books, films and plays, the public is split over whether Caesar was a force for good or bad.

Even Caesar's greatest critics cannot deny that he was a smart, inspiring individual. He was an accomplished military leader and, even more impressive, a self-made man, who was not handed success on a plate, but rather strived for it. He was a visionary who, whether it was for personal glory or not, wanted to shake up the system for the benefit of the common people. Decrepit roads were fixed, and public works funded. However, Rome was a country that was proud to be free of the rule of kings, and Caesar was driven by corrupt motivations to place himself in this role. Often his interests directly went against the interests of Rome, and he launched a bloody civil war and brought the republic to its knees in order to achieve them. Although he is often painted as more peaceful than his rivals, Caesar committed genocide on a large scale, destroying armies and starving out Gallic towns.

By today's standards Caesar would be among the most murderous, manipulative dictators alive. But he was living in a brutal era of backstabbing, deceit and bloodshed, and by the standards of the day he was a forgiving and likeable person. Although it would be convenient to label him as either hero or villain, Caesar was a complex person whose actions destroyed but also benefitted people. Driven by genuine goodwill, or a personal quest for power, it is likely that the legend's true motives will remain unclear forever.


This fountain of Caesar in Olomouc was based on a similar statue of Constantine the Great


At one point in the Battle of Alesia, the Romans were outnumbered four to one

37 he bet everything on winning the election to Pontifex Maximus, and even told his mother that he would either win or go into exile. One of the reasons Caesar is remembered as a military hero is because this reckless, risk-all streak put his men into incredibly difficult situations. They were often outnumbered by enemies they did not know on hostile territory, and at the last minute he would get them out of it. He called this ability 'Caesar's luck', and basically started inventing new means of warfare as he went along. It completely confused and surprised his more traditional, cautious foes, but it also very nearly ended in disaster several times, such as on his first expedition to Britain, where the intense tides of the Channel Islands caught him off-guard.

Intelligence and recklessness were a dangerous combination, but added to Caesar's boundless energetic nature, they were deadly. Caesar just did not stop. While governor of Gaul he fought wars for seven years, wrote seven books to document this, and constantly travelled throughout his life. In fact, Caesar seemed to struggle to stay in one place throughout his life; he was never sated with the status quo. This was also the case in his romantic exploits. He had three wives and countless mistresses over his life, and he juggled this while fighting war after war. His physical vitality for a reasonably old man also accounts for this sexual promiscuity, which was unusual even for Roman standards. He had affairs with married women, and several of these could have ended his career. Most famously, his love affair with Cleopatra could have easily cost him everything he had won. It is a testament to how charismatic an individual he must have been that he was able to have not-so-secret affairs with his senator's wives, while still remaining very good friends with them. Crassus, the richest man in Rome, actually helped Caesar to pay creditors while he was most likely very aware he was sleeping with his wife.

Caesar was, above all, likeable, and this could be chalked up to a number of key traits. Most obvious was his generosity. He bestowed lavish gifts on his friends and family. He also, time and time again, showed mercy to the nations he conquered, and spared the lives of political opponents who he defeated. Although this could be argued as generous, it could also be an aspect of his cunning nature. Nothing Caesar did was without purpose, and he showed his ability to be brutal on several occasions, so he was in no way soft-hearted. He was driven and power hungry, but he was so confident in his ability to turn people to his side, that he spared those who posed a huge threat to him. This tactic worked for years, but this sense of self-belief would also be his downfall. The majority of the Roman public, however, adored Caesar. He skilfully painted himself a champion for the people; he constructed public facilities, promoted commoners to critical posts in the government and army, and enforced new laws for their welfare. He also spent a huge amount of money on lavish games and festivals, which quickly won their favour. Many common people were distrustful of the Senate, regarding

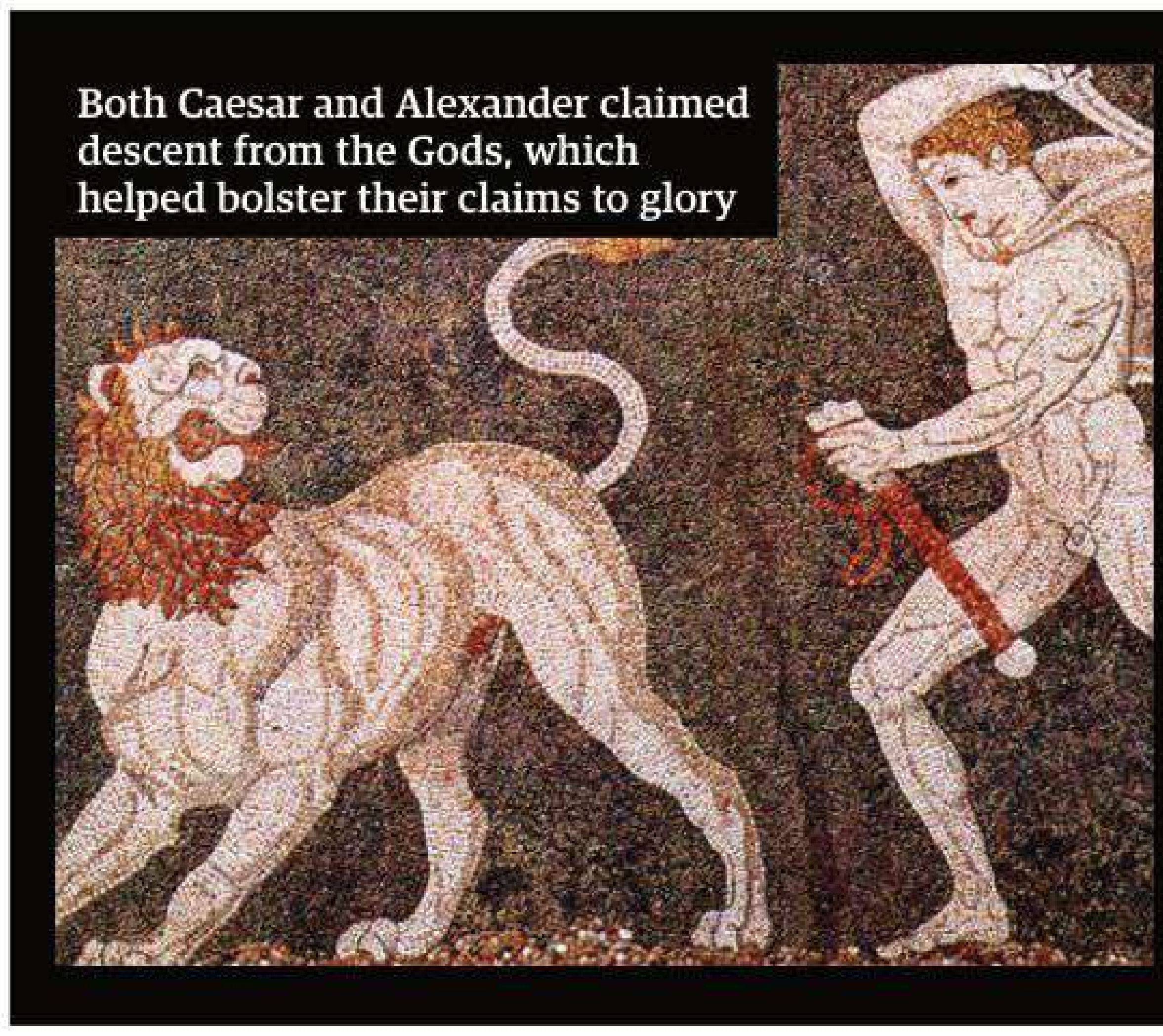
> He was so confident in his ability to turn people to his side that he spared those who posed a huge threat to him.

Today Caesar is regarded as one of the greatest military commanders of all time, and was admired by Napoleon Bonaparte

it as corrupt and oppressive, and Caesar seemed to be working against the old ways. He gave the people what they wanted, and they adored him for it. Historian Suetonius said Caesar "ranked amongst the Gods, not only by a formal decree," but in the hearts and minds of the people. Caesar was one of the first dictators to create a cult of personality around himself, and although to the poor he was a champion of their rights, his political opponents saw it differently.

They did not see a kind, generous man, but a power-hungry manipulator who would do whatever it took to get to the top. When one of Caesar's political opponents died, instead of rejoicing, he memorialised the man. To the public, this endeared them to Caesar, but those in politics saw he was doing it to prevent his rival becoming a martyr. This was another example that solidified the notion of the cunning, manipulative ruler to his critics.

Caesar, for all his supposed generosity, was not afraid to force his own agenda upon the Senate. He did, after all, name himself dictator for life. The aristocrats, in particular, did not like him taking away the amount of power they had over the lower classes, and disliked how he upset the status quo. Many army generals, like Pompey, were very wary of Caesar's ambitions, and the more support he received from the people, the more heightened were the concerns that he was vying for ultimate power. Caesar did replace disloyal senators with loyal ones, but crucially he did not strip his opponents of power, as his confidence in his skills was so great. This would prove fatal; these men were not swayed by fake displays of generosity, and they joined together to plot against him. To them, Caesar was a power-hungry dictator, consumed by his own importance, and it was only a matter of time until he controlled everything. This, of course, led to his murder in the Senate house. For many this was a victory; Gaius Marius said "Our tyrant deserved to die. Here was a man who wanted to be king of the Roman people and master of the whole world… It is not right or fair to want to be king in a state that… ought to be free." However, for his supporters, the assassination was a disaster. They formed a furious mob that hunted down the conspirators, and forced them to flee for their lives. The city turned to chaos, plunder, destruction and mass-grieving hysteria. Caesar made sure that his memory with the people would be a good one, as his will stipulated that his villa, gardens and art gallery be made public. His wealth was distributed to the people at 300,000 sestertii to each citizen. Whether this was genuine generosity and goodwill or a clever play to immortalise himself, the people were so touched by his actions that they gathered around his ashes, grieving for days. We can see the power of Caesar's legacy in the reign of Augustus, his named heir who turned Caesar's dream of emperor into a reality. Those who followed as ruler of Rome were often cutthroat, mentally unstable and murderous, killing their own family members. When compared with these men, Caesar seems a reasonable, measured and great man. In a way, the legacy he set up in the form of emperor has helped to bolster his own posthumous reputation. Opinions today differ as much as they did in Caesar's time, but the fact that he is still being spoken about by people all over the world with such passion proves that Caesar's quest to be remembered, for good or bad, was a successful one.



Both Caesar and Alexander claimed descent from the Gods, which helped bolster their claims to glory

In the footsteps of legends

There was a host of daring and intrepid leaders who inspired Caesar to strive for success in the way he did, including his own uncle, Marius. However, the most notable figure who Caesar tried to emulate was Alexander the Great. The occasion upon which Caesar looked upon the statue of Alexander and bemoaned his own lack of impact has become legendary, but many similarities can be drawn between the two men.

Both of them were driven by the idea of becoming heroes in the eyes of their people. They wanted to change the status quo, to bend the rules of their countries and leave a lasting legacy for centuries to come. Although both were accomplished on the battlefield, they relied more on their luck and last-minute hasty decisions. Like Alexander, who fought on the frontlines, Caesar was eager to get in the heart of the action in battles, wearing a bright robe so his men could spot him and be encouraged. This endeared them to their troops, and earned them loyalty and respect. It was said that, at the time of his death, Caesar had plans to invade the Parthian Empire, emulating his hero's conquest. However, following Alexander may have led Caesar to his death. Alexander was a king, and answered to no one, Caesar, as much as he wished to be, was not, and his quest to replicate this ultimate power led to distrust, suspicion and his eventual assassination.

Dictator's handbook

ANCIENT ROME

51 BCE

Eight years ago, the three most powerful men in the Republic of Rome joined forces to rule as a triumvirate. Pompey is the greatest living military commander, Crassus is the richest man in Rome and you, Julius Caesar, are one of its most prominent politicians. With your combined money and influence, you overcame the objections of the Senate to enact populist land reforms and redistribute wealth to the poor. You also got yourself appointed governor of Gaul, but the various tribes living in the region haven't always been happy about this, and so much of your time in the triumvirate has been spent away from Rome, commanding your legions. But now Crassus is dead, killed in battle, and Pompey, left alone in Rome, has grown arrogant, corrupt and suspicious of you. It's time to return and take control.

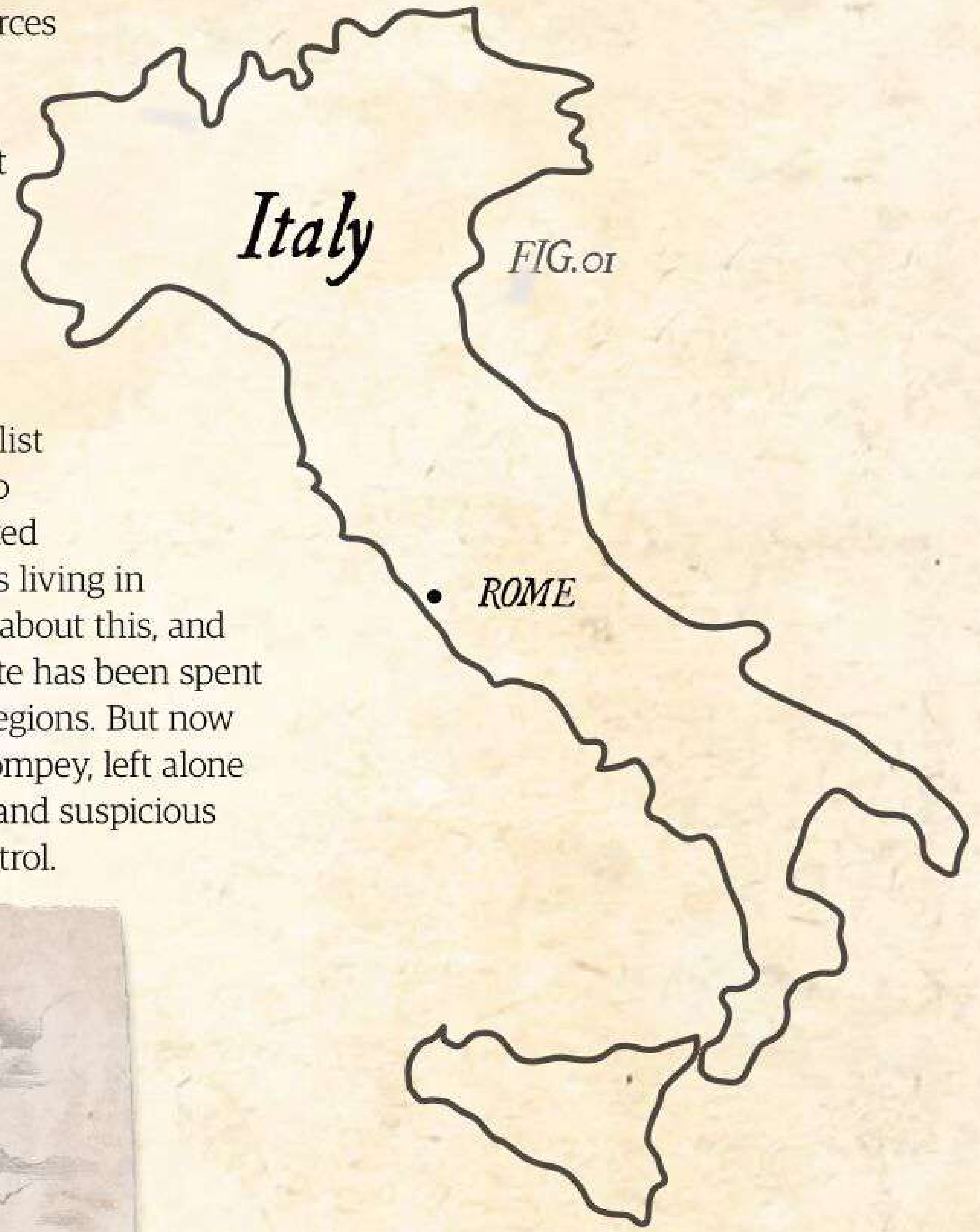


FIG.01

FIG.02

WHERE TO STAY

Rome

While you were in Gaul as governor, you had immunity from prosecution, but your five-year term is now up. You can't be re-elected without returning to Rome, but if you return before you are elected, you risk attack or arrest from your enemies in the Senate. The solution is to return with the 13th legion to protect you. Entering Rome under arms has also been explicitly forbidden by the Senate though, so as soon as you cross the Rubicon river that demarcates the province of Rome, you will be committing an act of rebellion and plunging the Republic into civil war.

Dos & don'ts

☑ **Preempt your problems**
March with your armies to Spain to defeat the legions loyal to Pompey there, so they can't cause trouble for you back in Rome.

☑ **Inspire loyalty in your troops**
Four of your veteran legions will mutiny over pay and loot southern Rome. Threaten to fight in Africa without them; they'll beg to rejoin you.

☑ **Write your own history**
As your hero, Alexander the Great, discovered, the best way to be remembered is to tell your own story. Make sure you write detailed accounts of your campaigns.

☑ **Stay at home on 15 March 44 BCE**
As a general who already consults soothsayers before battles, it's rather a good idea to pay attention to your wife's troubling dreams concerning the Ides of March.

☒ **Chase Pompey across the Adriatic**
His sea blockade will prevent you from moving enough troops to Dyrrachium (modern Albania), allowing him to defeat you in your first battle against him.

☒ **Bring Cleopatra to Rome**
Installing a foreign queen and your mistress in your own villa in the Roman countryside, will make you even more unpopular in the senate.

☒ **Abandon the republic**
Changing Rome from a republic to an empire is a huge political shift, and concentrating power in your hands too quickly is bound to make enemies.

☒ **Pardon all your opponents**
Your policy of clemency is much admired. But allowing your enemies from the civil war to remain in the Senate may eventually prove your undoing.

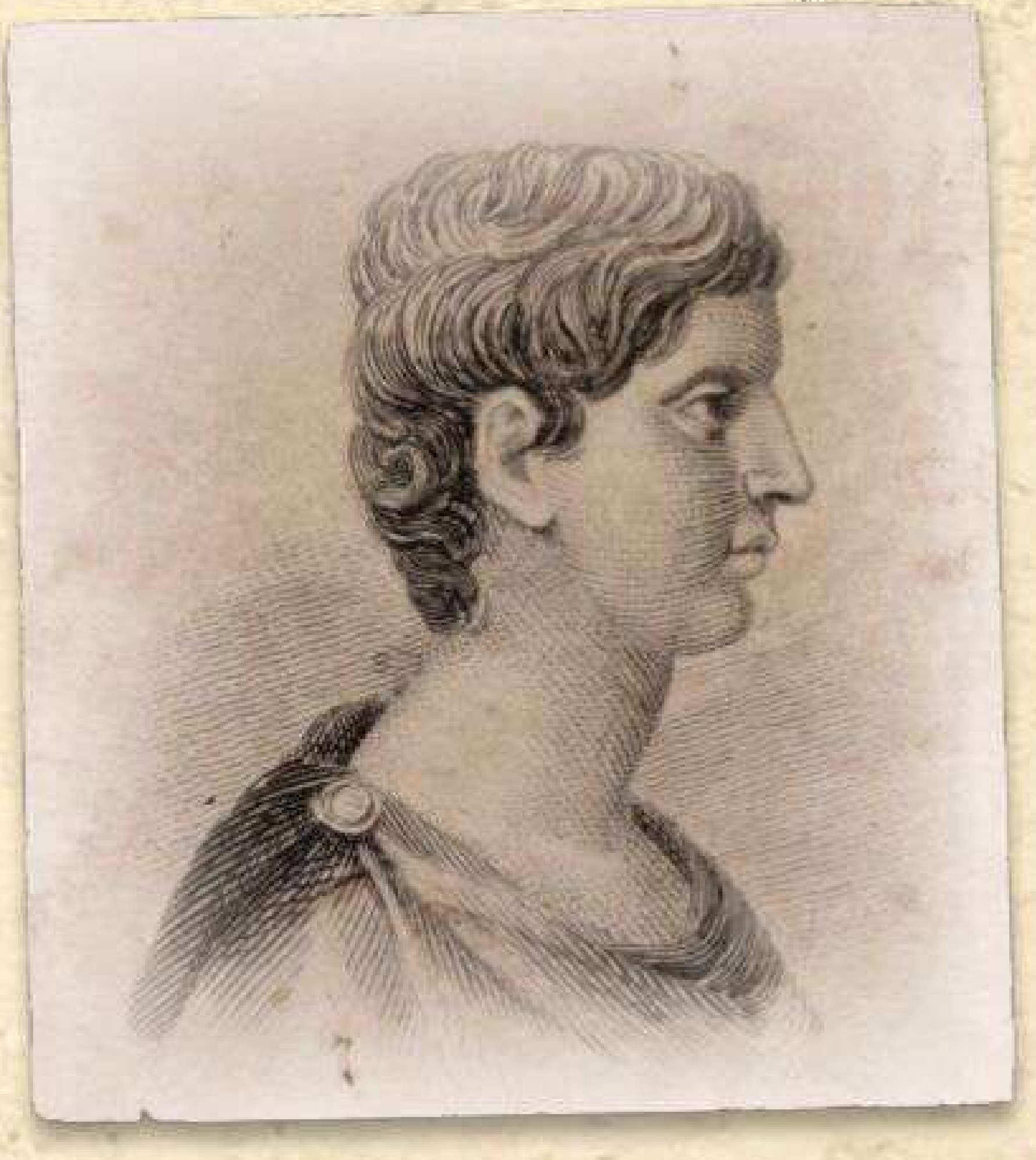
WHO TO BEFRIEND

Mark Antony

A loyal general during your conquest of Gaul, Mark Antony is also a skilled diplomat. If you can arrange for him to be elected as one of the ten 'People's Tribunes', he will have the political power to veto any Senate vote that threatens you. Antony is a peacemaker at heart, and will argue for various compromises between you and Pompey. But if and when open civil war erupts, Antony's veto will effectively give you immunity from prosecution. When you are appointed dictator, you can make Antony the 'Master of the Horse' - your second in command - to rule Italy while you are away pursuing Pompey's legions.

Extra tip:
The night before you are assassinated, Mark Antony will learn of the plot. If you can stress to him the importance of immediately passing on information like this, instead of waiting until the next day, you might just escape being stabbed 23 times outside the Theatre of Pompey!

FIG.03



WHO TO AVOID

Cato the Younger

Cato is a staunch defender of the Republic, and scrupulously incorruptible. Despite being wealthy, he eats very frugally and drinks only the cheapest wine. But this isn't out of miserliness, so much as his determination to be above reproach. He is probably the most conscientious member of the Senate and has repeatedly refused honours and promotions that he sees as unconstitutional favours. This makes him very dangerous to you. During the triumvirate, he constantly blocked your motions, and now that you are moving to seize power, he openly opposes you. His principles will ultimately prove his undoing, however, because he would rather commit suicide than surrender to you.

FIG.04

Helpful skills

Do you have what it takes to wrest control of the most powerful state in the world?

FIG.05

Oratory

Studying rhetoric in Rhodes as a younger man has helped turn you into a powerful public speaker. This makes you popular with the masses, and garners influence in the Senate.

Bribery

The Roman Republic is technically a democracy, but elections are often won through outright bribery - both of the senators and the general public. This is how you became Pontifex Maximus in 63 BCE.

FIG.06

Military tactics

FIG.07

You have often been described as a lucky commander, but anyone who is so consistently lucky in battle must also be a brilliant tactician, both in open battle and siege warfare.

Beware the Ides of March

In a desperate bid to save their beloved country, 60 men decided to murder its leader

What do you do when you're worried about the state of your homeland? When you think it's being run into the ground by one man with too much power? Decimus Junius Brutus Albinus was in that precarious situation and, in the summer of 45 BCE, he decided what had to be done. After getting his brother-in-law Marcus Brutus to join, things began to gather pace. Their plan? To kill Julius Caesar.

There were several reasons for people to dislike Caesar. One of the prevailing factors was that the senators – particularly those in the conservative optimates faction – were becoming increasingly concerned about Caesar turning his family into a ruling dynasty. There were rumours swirling around the city that he was going to govern with Cleopatra as his queen and Caesarion as their heir, as well as whispers that Caesar would hand everything over to his adopted son Octavian. For many that was just too close to those long-gone days of the hated, tyrannous kings. Even those who didn't see him becoming a king had noticed his growing arrogance. He always wore his thinning hair combed forward with a laurel wreath to hide his baldness. His supposed heightened sense of self-worth was also evident during the annual festival of Lupercalia in February 44 BCE when Mark Antony attempted to place a laurel wreath on Caesar's head. While Caesar refused, many were convinced that he had staged the entire event. Cicero even went so far as to call it the beginning of the end for Rome.

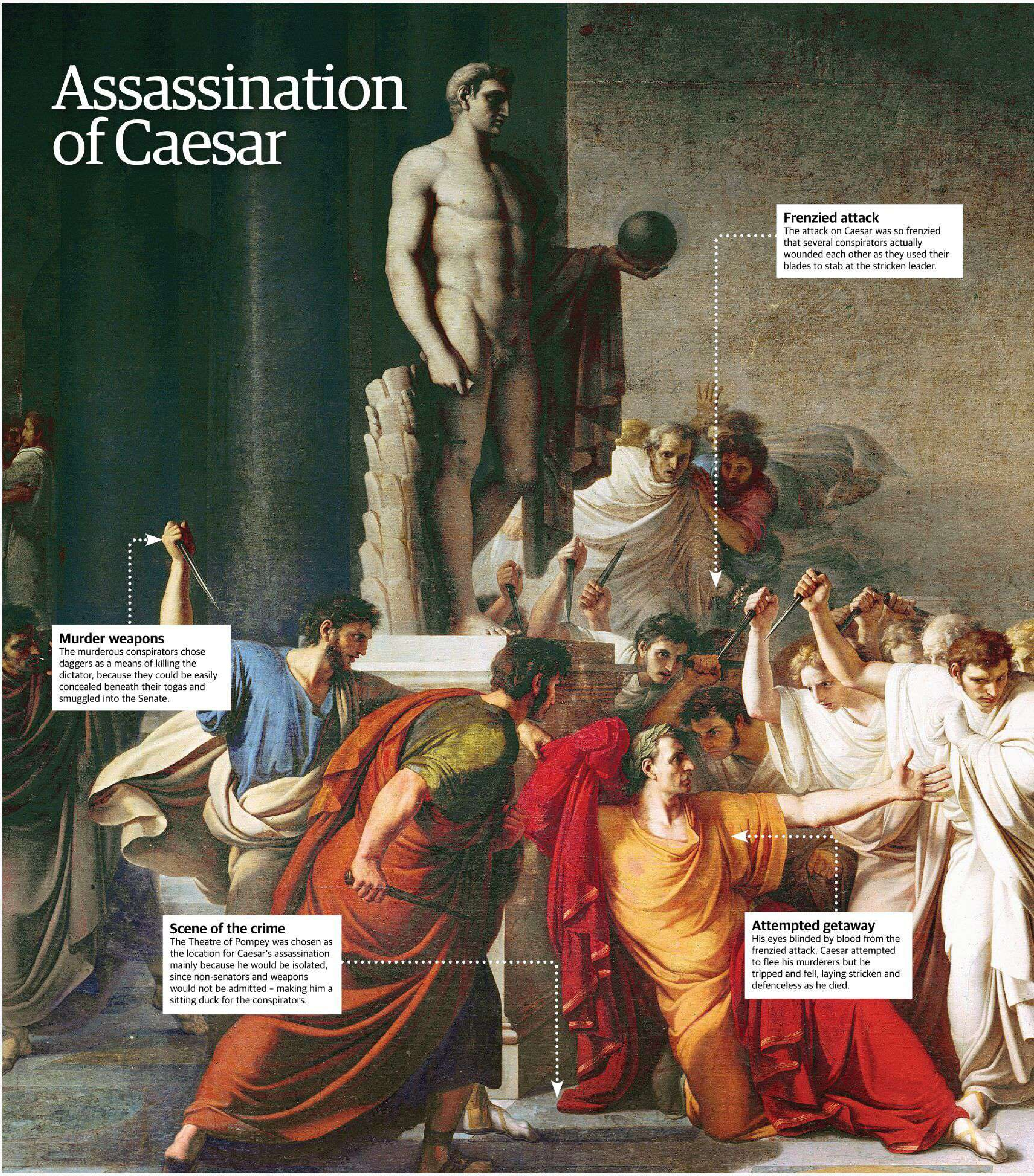
> During his murder, Caesar was stabbed 23 times, however, only the second stab wound is believed to have proved fatal.

There was also the matter of Caesar's behaviour when he had been at war with Pompey in Spain. In a bloody, violent conflict, many in Rome had lost fathers, brothers and sons when they went off to fight, while those who hadn't considered the soldiers part of their own family. He rode into Rome wearing triumphant garments and a laurel crown, something that many people found to be completely unnecessary, more than a little extravagant, and an insult to the lives of their lost loved ones. His arrogance was also manifest in his actions in the Senate. He sat on what could only be described as a golden throne, adorned in the purple regalia of the ancient Roman kings. He also often refused to rise when approached by senators, which showed his lack of respect for those beneath him. There was even a statue of him that was carried along with the statues of the gods in processions and parades – something that Caesar didn't outright encourage, but then he didn't stop the practice, either.

The optimates, who had never liked Caesar, despised his reforms. With grain being given to the urban poor, shorter terms for provincial governors and a new calendar, the conservative Republic they knew and loved was being threatened. More importantly, their voices and power were gradually being diminished. There would be no shortage of men willing to join the plot to kill Caesar. Although some didn't necessarily join out of hatred for what Caesar had done – it was what he could do in the future that was the problem. The conspirators met secretly around the city of Rome and in small groups to avoid detection – if they were found out, it could be the end for them as well as their beloved Republic. All told, there were about 60 plotters, 20 of which we know at least the names of today. However, some were more prominent than others and they all had their own reasons for wanting to see Caesar dead. Some of the most well-known plotters, apart from the aforementioned Decimus, were Gaius Trebonius, who had fought on Caesar's side in Spain, Gaius Cassius Longinus, who had served under Crassus and Pompey as a naval commander, and Marcus Junius Brutus, the greedy, arrogant general who had served under Pompey and the son of one of Caesar's favourite mistresses, Servilia. In fact, Brutus turned to Caesar's side in 48 BCE,

Mark Antony delivers a funeral oration over the body of Julius Caesar

Assassination of Caesar

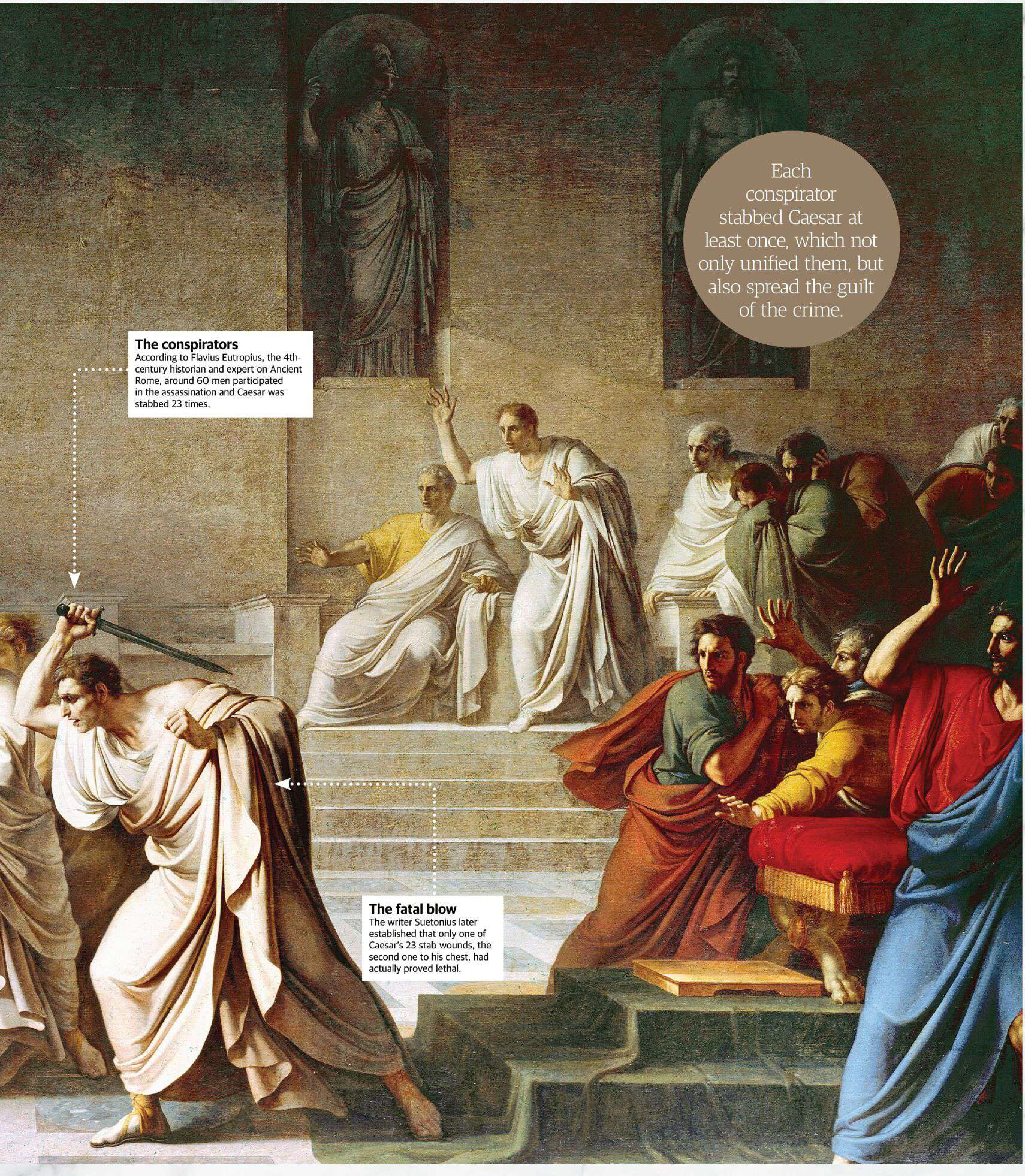


Frenzied attack
The attack on Caesar was so frenzied that several conspirators actually wounded each other as they used their blades to stab at the stricken leader.

Murder weapons
The murderous conspirators chose daggers as a means of killing the dictator, because they could be easily concealed beneath their togas and smuggled into the Senate.

Scene of the crime
The Theatre of Pompey was chosen as the location for Caesar's assassination mainly because he would be isolated, since non-senators and weapons would not be admitted – making him a sitting duck for the conspirators.

Attempted getaway
His eyes blinded by blood from the frenzied attack, Caesar attempted to flee his murderers but he tripped and fell, laying stricken and defenceless as he died.



Each conspirator stabbed Caesar at least once, which not only unified them, but also spread the guilt of the crime.

The conspirators
According to Flavius Eutropius, the 4th-century historian and expert on Ancient Rome, around 60 men participated in the assassination and Caesar was stabbed 23 times.

The fatal blow
The writer Suetonius later established that only one of Caesar's 23 stab wounds, the second one to his chest, had actually proved lethal.

betraying Pompey by providing intelligence to the enemy. But it was Brutus' marriage to Porcia in 45 BCE that made him turn once more. Porcia's father was Cato, Caesar's late archenemy, and her family was powerful. What could Brutus do?

Once the group had decided that killing Caesar was the best course of action, they needed to sort out when, where and how. But planning wouldn't be an issue – most of the conspirators were military men who were used to precision and a certain amount of secrecy. It was decided early on that they would have to do the deed themselves, the main reason being that it showed they were more serious about their fatherland. Hiring killers would be too impersonal. The location caused a considerable amount of debate among the rebels. Should they attack in public or in private? Springing on Caesar while he watched a gladiator match, walked home along the Via Sacra or rode on the Appian Way were all bandied around until they finally decided on the Theatre of Pompey, the temporary location of the Senate while the actual Senate House in Rome was being prepared. As time passed, they began to become worried about when they should strike. Finally, they decided on a date: 15 March 44 BCE, the Ides of March. Caesar would have to attend the Senate and it was four days before his announced departure date to do what he did best – wage war. This time, the conflict was to be another Dacian campaign and the last thing the conspirators wanted was to be bossed around by their leader's underlings in his absence as he got more power and glory abroad. As the date approached, more intelligence was gathered and Decimus was essential in this regard – Caesar never realised that he had turned against him. The traitor was able to report on what Caesar was thinking and what he was going to do next. He also took the time to gain control of a group of gladiators, who would play a key role at a crucial moment later on.

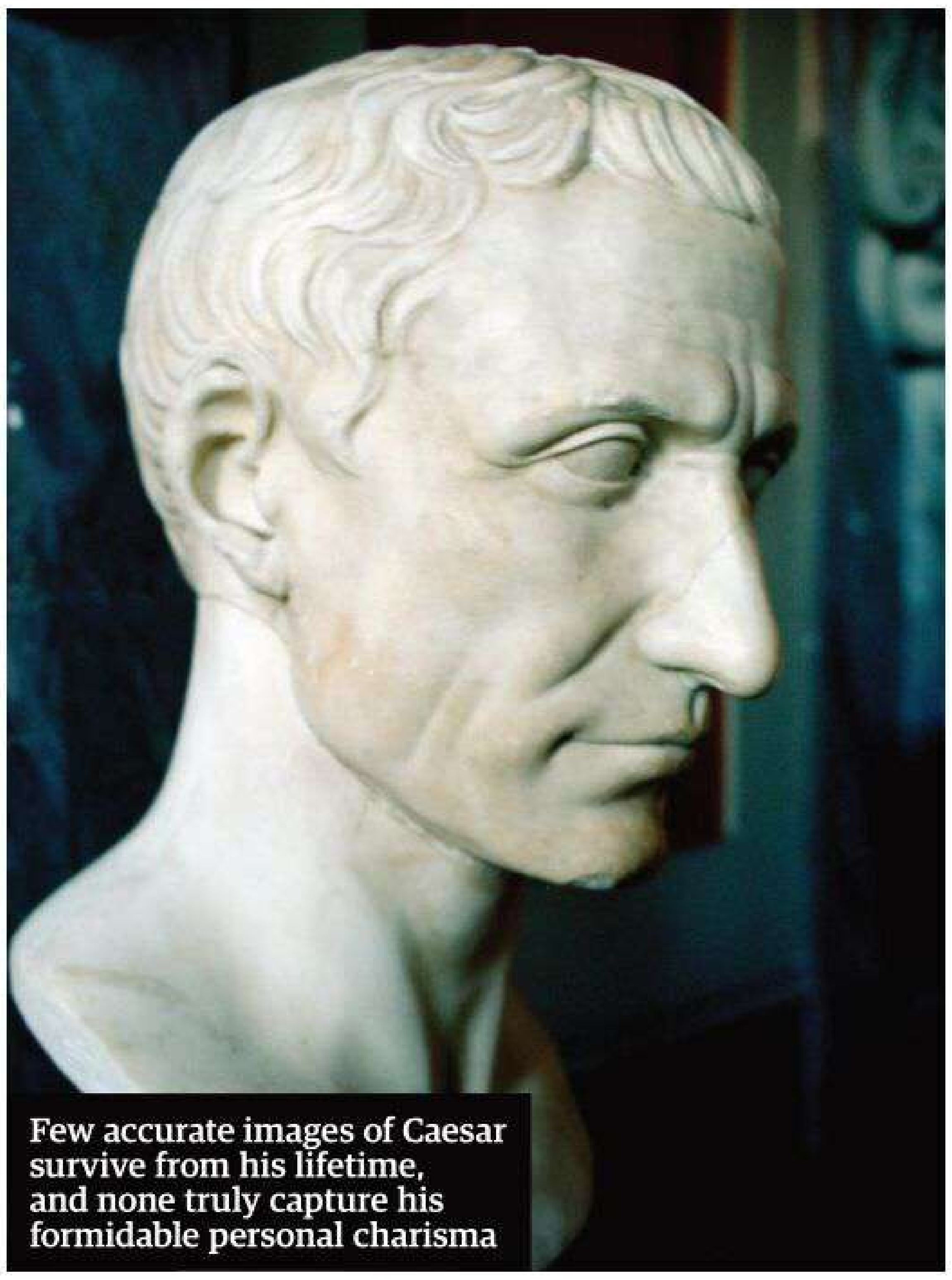
The plot was so clandestine that Caesar had no idea what was going on. In fact, Caesar even dined with one of the soon-to-be assassins on the night of 14 March. When asked his opinion on the sweetest kind of death, the leader dropped his guard, thinking he was in the company of friends. Without missing a beat, he responded, "The kind that comes without warning."

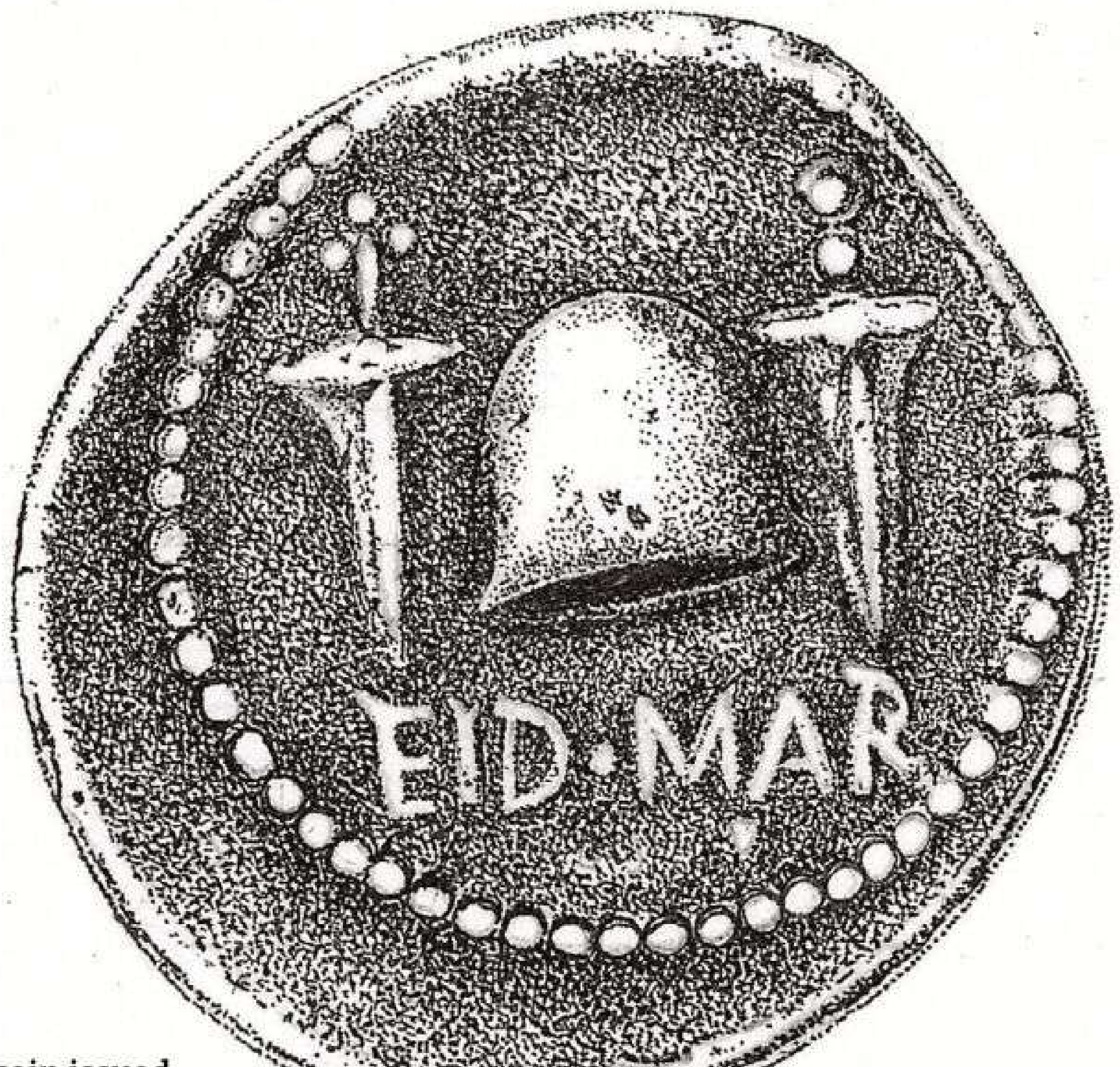
In a way, Caesar had had some warning. A soothsayer had already told him to beware the Ides of March. He'd predicted that the Roman citizens' loved and exalted ruler would be dead before the end of 15 March but Caesar seemed to be ignoring omens that were pointing to his death – and there was more than just the soothsayer.

On the way home, Caesar's horses that were grazing on the banks of the Rubicon were seen to be weeping and that night, his wife, Calpurnia, woke in tears after a terrifying nightmare. Her husband had been cradled in her arms, bleeding to death. In the morning, she begged Caesar not to go to the Senate but she had little to worry about – Caesar had come down with an illness. Weak and bedridden, there was no way he was going to make it to the Theatre of Pompey for the Senate meeting.

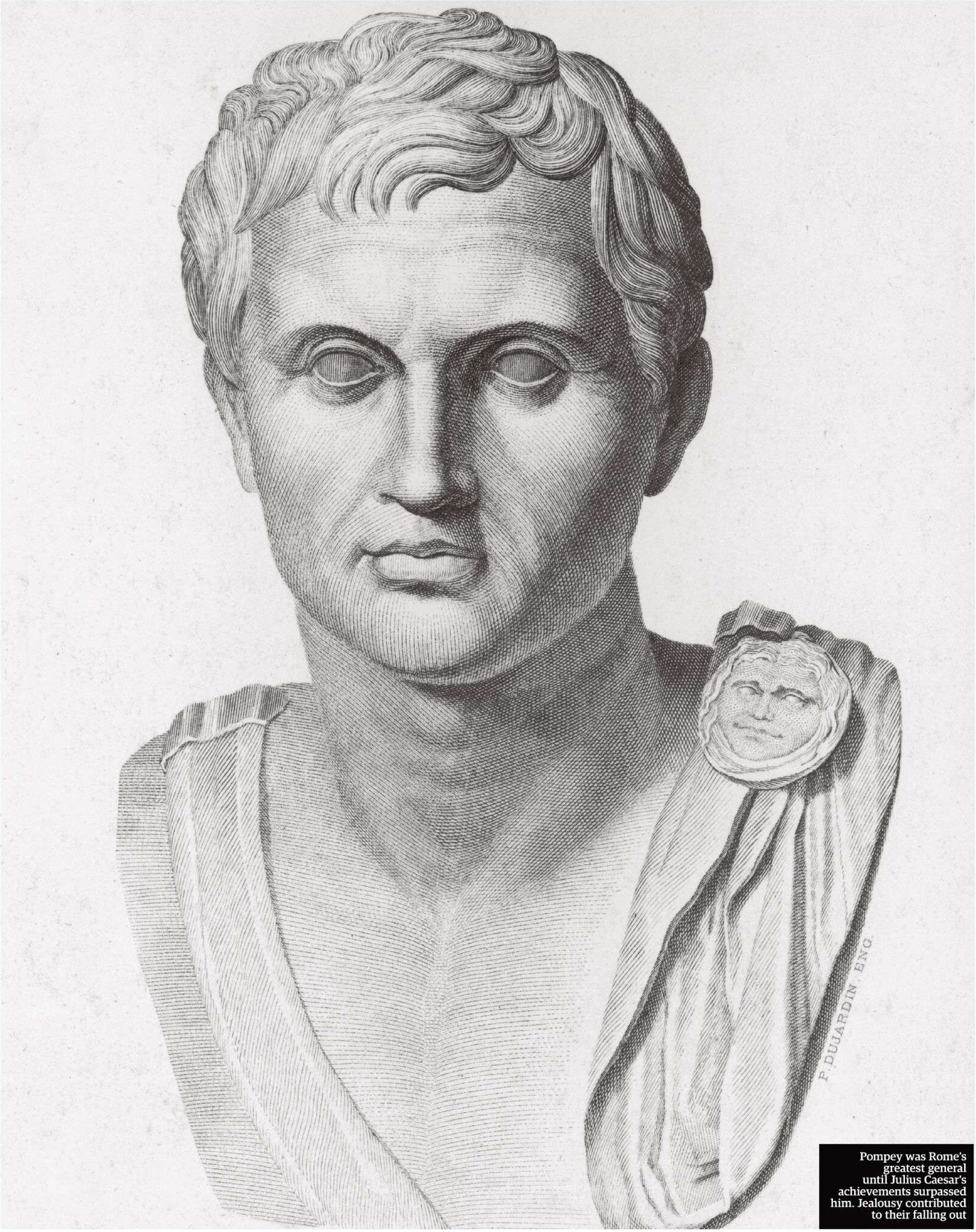
What a distraught Calpurnia hadn't counted on was Decimus coming to the house to fetch Caesar personally. Undeterred by the dictator's illness, Decimus convinced Caesar to at least make an appearance, even if it was just to postpone the meeting. Caesar reluctantly agreed. On the way there, he came across the same soothsayer who had predicted his ill fortune. "The day which you warned me against is here and I am still alive," Caesar gloated. The soothsayer's simple response was, "Yes, it is here – but it is not yet past." Arriving at the Theatre of Pompey, a bird carrying a sprig of laurel in its beak reportedly flew into the building – but it was eaten by a bigger bird. Caesar took no notice. Instead, he saw Mark Antony deep in

A pugio (the standard-issue military dagger used to kill Caesar)


Few accurate images of Caesar survive from his lifetime, and none truly capture his formidable personal charisma



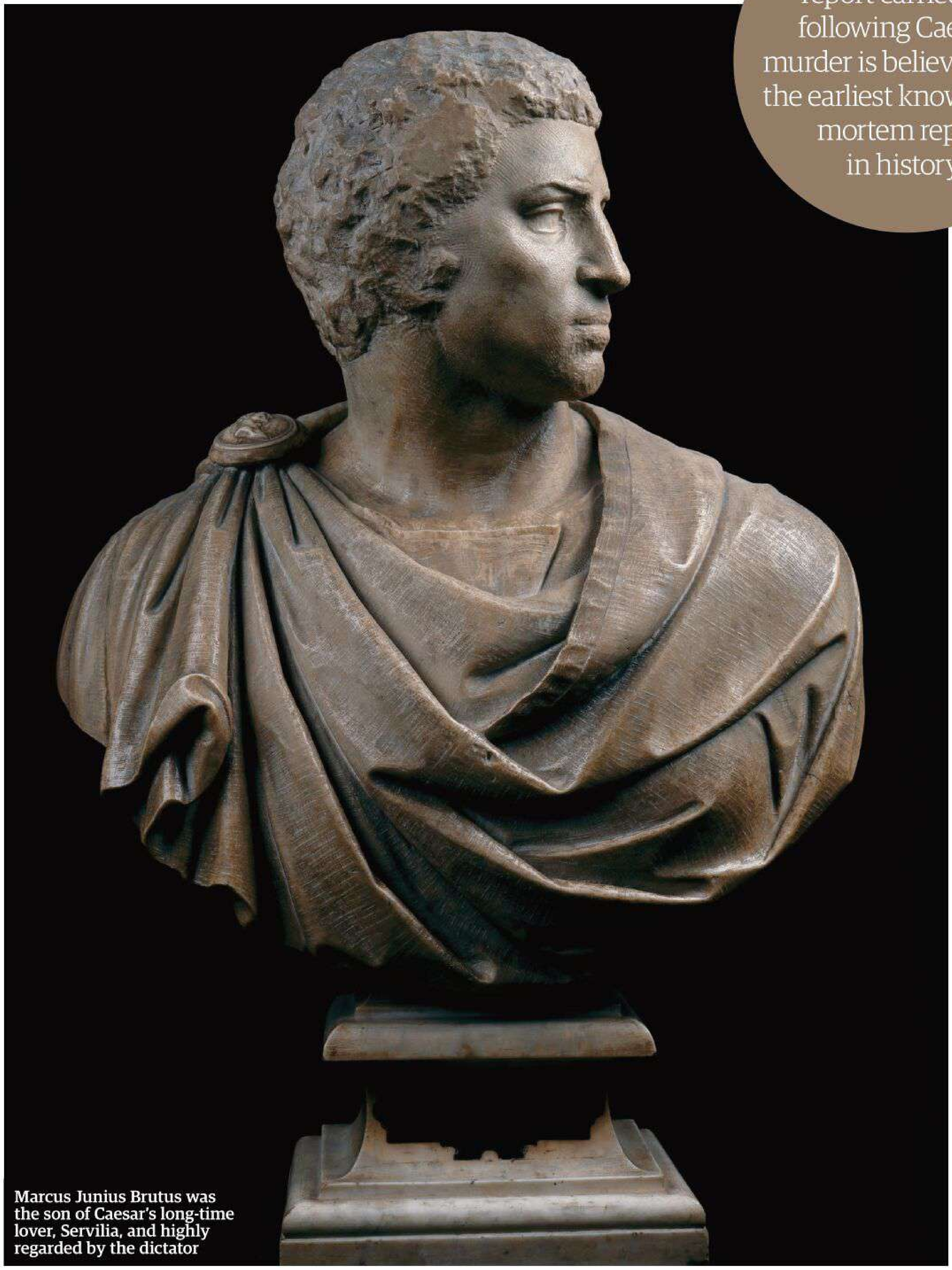
A coin issued by conspirators in 43/42 BCE to celebrate Caesar's murder shows daggers and the felt cap worn by freed slaves. The inscription reads EID. MAR. ('the Ides of March')


P. DUJARDIN. ENG.

Pompey was Rome's greatest general until Julius Caesar's achievements surpassed him. Jealousy contributed to their falling out conversation with Trebonius. Little did Caesar know that Trebonius' role in the plot was to keep the man most likely to come to his aid busy. Decimus also made sure his gladiators were ready in case they were needed – they were to be a backup security force in case things went south. As Caesar crossed the threshold, a man named Artemidorus tried to warn him of the imminent danger by thrusting a scroll into his hand. Caesar ignored it, not knowing that that simple act would end his life. He made his way to his golden chair and sat. Some men stood behind the chair but he paid them no mind.

Tillius Cimber, a soldier who used to serve under Caesar, went up to the dictator and tried to hand him a petition. True to form, Caesar didn't rise when Cimber approached – but it didn't matter any more. He rejected the petition and Cimber used the opportunity to reach out and pull at his purple toga. That was the signal. Senators leapt at Caesar, revealing their standard-issue military daggers that they had kept hidden under their togas. Speed was of the essence – there were only 60 men in the conspiracy, a small number compared to the other 140 senators and ten tribunes present with their slaves and secretaries. As Publius Servilius Casca struck the first blow, Caesar called out to Cimber, "Why, this is violence!" He tried to fight back by stabbing Casca with a stylus, and two of his supporters – Lucius Marcius Censorinus and Gaius Calvisius Sabinus – tried to rush to his aid but conspirators blocked their way. Caesar was stabbed 23 times in total by people he had considered friends and colleagues. Marcus Brutus stabbed his groin, causing Caesar to whimper, "You too, my child?" As he experienced the excruciating pain – most of the blows seemed to hit his rib cage – he covered his head with his toga so that no one would see his face as he died. He staggered a little around the room before finally falling dead at the feet of a statue of Pompey. The first part of the conspirators' plan was done – but the rest wouldn't be so easy. It turned out that the planning had only gone as far as killing Caesar – no one knew what to do next. Those who hated Caesar wanted to seize his corpse and throw it into the Tiber so that they were done with him forever, but Mark Antony stopped them. As Caesar's body lay lifeless at the foot of Pompey's statue, Brutus rushed out of the theatre and to the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill. From a platform, he gleefully announced the death of Caesar – but the reaction wasn't what he had expected. Instead of the citizens rejoicing that this threat to the Republic was gone, there were screams that quickly turned to rioting. Brutus tried his best to calm the crowd but to no avail. As slaves carried the late dictator's body through the streets to his home on a litter, one of his arms hanging down, according to the Roman historian Suetonius, the people wept and wails of grief could be heard from Rome's Jews as they mourned the man who had served as their patron.

The autopsy report carried out following Caesar's murder is believed to be the earliest known post-mortem report in history.


Marcus Junius Brutus was the son of Caesar's long-time lover, Servilia, and highly regarded by the dictator

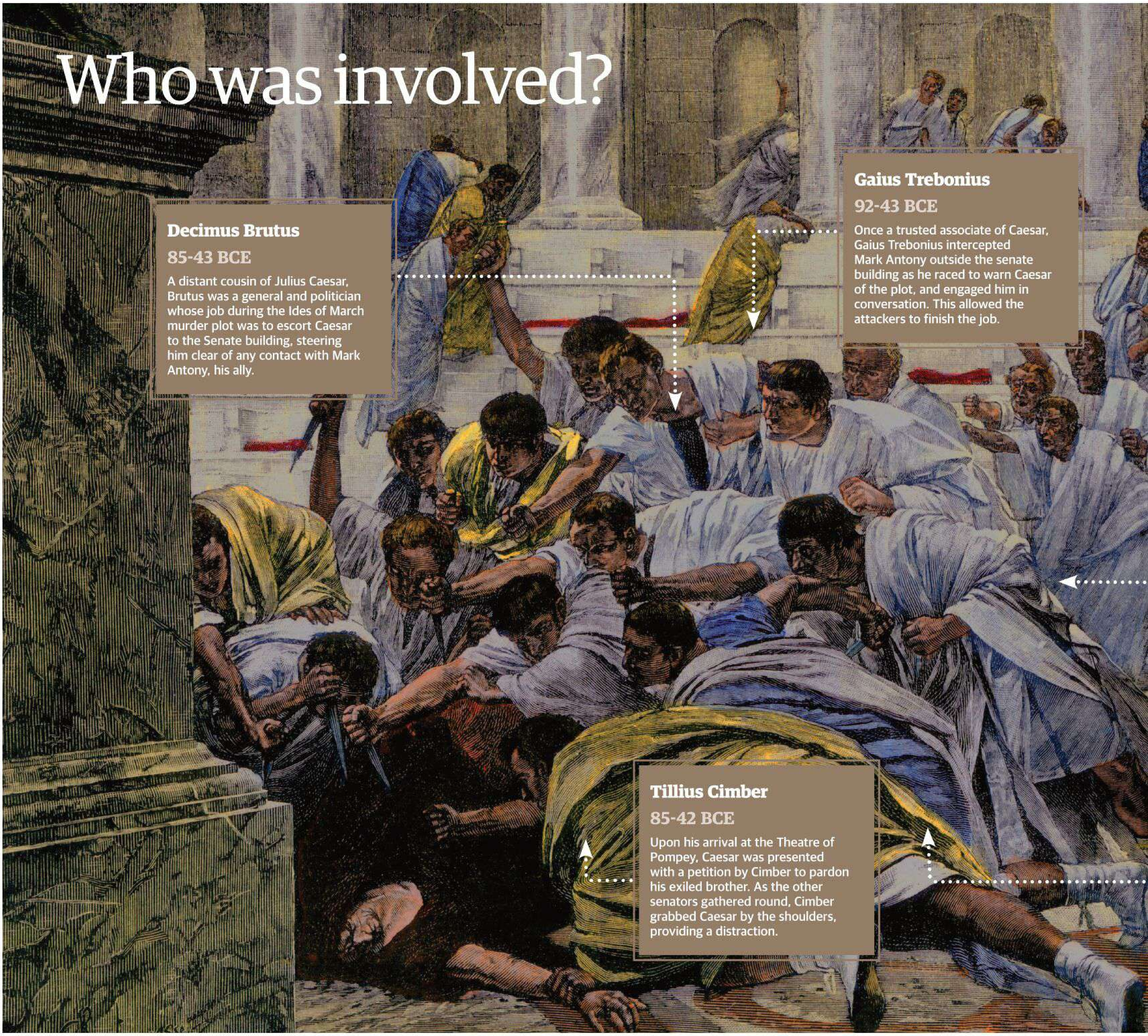
On 20 March, Caesar's funeral procession made its way through the city, headed for a pyre that had been built on the Field of Mars near his family's tomb. However, bereaved citizens managed to get the body and took it to the Roman Forum where it was burned on a much simpler pyre. The ashes were later left in the family tomb.

The conspirators had hoped that the death would save the Republic – that life would return to the way it had always been. What they hadn't counted on was the citizens' love for Caesar and how ready the city was for change. The Republic was crumbling and all they'd done was hasten it. While Mark Antony now had a considerable amount of power – as he showed when he sought a compromise with the Senate on 17 March to keep Caesar's laws intact in exchange for amnesty for the conspirators – a civil war between him and Caesar's adopted son Octavian was becoming more and more likely. The peace that the plotters had so desperately wished for wasn't going to happen until the Republic fell. Most of the conspirators fled.

Perhaps killing Caesar hadn't been the best course of action for the plotters. Maybe if they'd planned what to do in the immediate aftermath, they could have controlled the situation better. But the rebels had acted in the name of the Republic, trying desperately to protect all that they held dear. How could they have known it would lead directly to its downfall?

Caesar meeting Cleopatra, by Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo, 1747

Who was involved?



Decimus Brutus

85-43 BCE

A distant cousin of Julius Caesar, Brutus was a general and politician whose job during the Ides of March murder plot was to escort Caesar to the Senate building, steering him clear of any contact with Mark Antony, his ally.

Gaius Trebonius

92-43 BCE

Once a trusted associate of Caesar, Gaius Trebonius intercepted Mark Antony outside the senate building as he raced to warn Caesar of the plot, and engaged him in conversation. This allowed the attackers to finish the job.

Tillius Cimber

85-42 BCE

Upon his arrival at the Theatre of Pompey, Caesar was presented with a petition by Cimber to pardon his exiled brother. As the other senators gathered round, Cimber grabbed Caesar by the shoulders, providing a distraction.

Timeline

OCTOBER 45 BCE

Caesar dismisses his security

Believing that nobody would dare attack him, Caesar dismissed his Spanish bodyguard, an act that would allow the conspirators to carry out their ghastly plot effectively.

45 BCE

FEBRUARY 44 BCE

Dictator for life

Caesar is named dictator for life, an honour which saw him elevated to almost divine status. His inflated arrogance began to infuriate those around him, especially his close allies in the Senate.

44 BCE

FEBRUARY 44 BCE

The festival of Lupercalia

When Mark Antony attempted to place a laurel wreath on Caesar's head while in the Forum, Caesar pushed it away stating that Jupiter was the king of Romans, an act that many saw as staged.

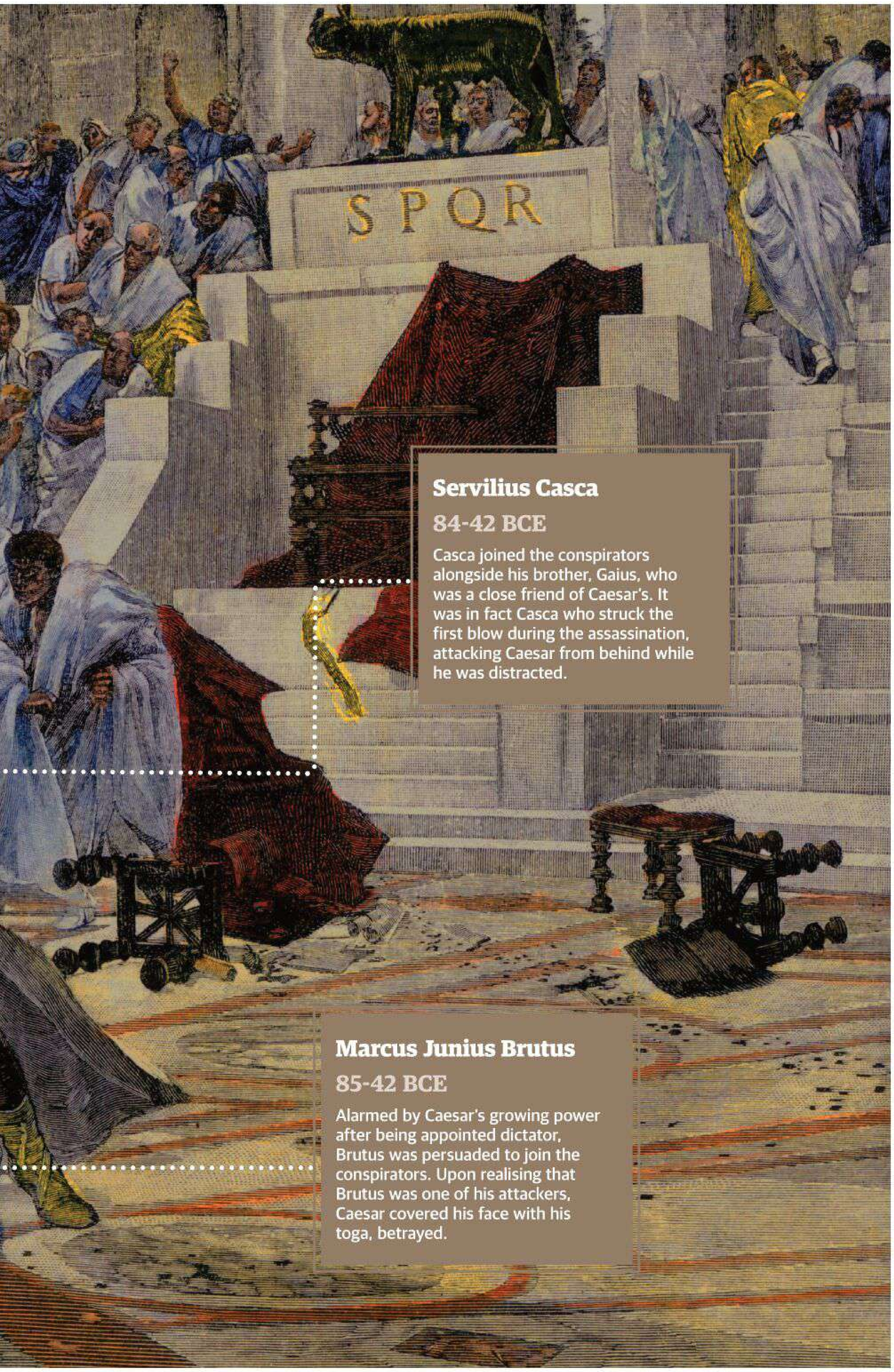
44 BCE

MARCH 44 BCE

The plot is hatched

As they formulated their plot to kill Caesar, the conspirators met secretly in small groups to avoid detection. As Caesar was due to embark on a three year campaign they had to act quick.

44 BCE



Servilius Casca

84-42 BCE

Casca joined the conspirators alongside his brother, Gaius, who was a close friend of Caesar's. It was in fact Casca who struck the first blow during the assassination, attacking Caesar from behind while he was distracted.

Marcus Junius Brutus

85-42 BCE

Alarmed by Caesar's growing power after being appointed dictator, Brutus was persuaded to join the conspirators. Upon realising that Brutus was one of his attackers, Caesar covered his face with his toga, betrayed.

Caesar's final hours

Discover the motivations behind Caesar's assassination, and what actually happened on that fateful day

When it happened

In 44 BCE Caesar planned a major expedition against Parthia to avenge Crassus, and would be away for several years. Three days before he was due to leave, the assassins struck. It was 15 March – or the Ides, one of the three named days in each Roman month.

The noblest Roman

Brutus was the son of Caesar's long-time mistress, Servilia, and her first husband. He was seen as an up-and-coming man in the Senate, although so far he had achieved little. A follower of the stern stoic philosophy, he was determined to the point of obsession. Caesar said: "Whatever Brutus wants, he wants badly." Brutus insisted that only Caesar be killed, and naively seems to have assumed that a pristine republic would somehow spring back to life once the dictator was dead.

Lean and hungry

Cassius was married to Brutus' sister, Tertia. Rumour said that she had had an affair with Caesar. Cassius had won fame by extricating the survivors of Crassus' army after the disaster in Parthia. He was said to be jealous of the favour Caesar showed to Brutus.

Liberty

Brutus and Cassius were doing rather well under the dictatorship, but they and their fellow conspirators felt that the very existence of a dictator meant that the Republic could not function. It should also be said that if they succeeded, they could expect to be the leading men in the restored Republic.

The meek martyr

Caesar is often depicted accepting his fate meekly. In fact, when first stabbed, he turned and yelled: "Bloody Casca, what are you playing at!" He then drew the long stylus pen he was carrying and jabbed at Casca with its sharp iron point. Caesar was wounded 23 times, although in the confusion, several of the conspirators, including Brutus, were accidentally stabbed by their comrades.

"Et tu, Brute?"

Although Shakespeare's version follows the biographer Plutarch's account closely, it is unlikely that these were Caesar's final words. Instead, he seems to have spoken in Greek, looking at Brutus and saying "Kai su, teknon?" ("You too, my son?"). It is unclear whether this was said in sad disappointment or in contemptuous defiance.

Friends, Romans and countrymen

Mark Antony was Caesar's fellow consul, and persuaded the conspirators to agree to giving the dictator a public funeral. While we do not know what he said, Shakespeare's version gives a fine impression of Roman political oratory, and the result was rioting against the conspirators. Fleeing Rome, Brutus, Cassius and the others began to raise armies and act just as Caesar and Pompey had done in the past.

15 MARCH 44 BCE

The Ides of March
Despite being begged not to go by his wife, Calpurnia, (who awoke hysterical after nightmares depicting impending danger to Caesar) he attended the Senate and was assassinated.
44 BCE

20 MARCH 44 BCE

The funeral procession
Caesar was due to be cremated on a pyre in the Field of Mars, close to his family tomb, but his body was seized by locals and taken to the Forum where it was burned on a simpler pyre.
44 BCE

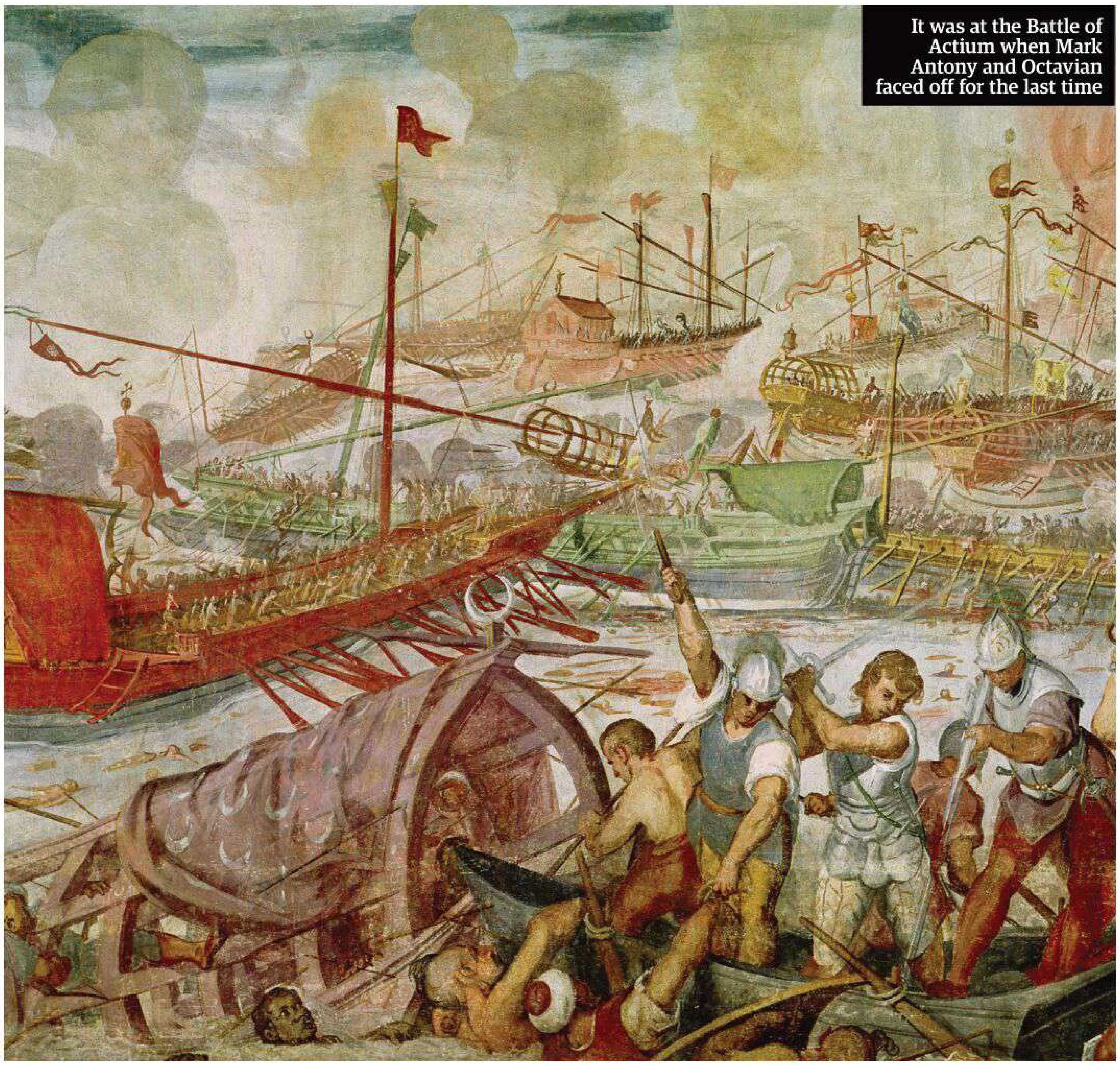
The Second Triumvirate

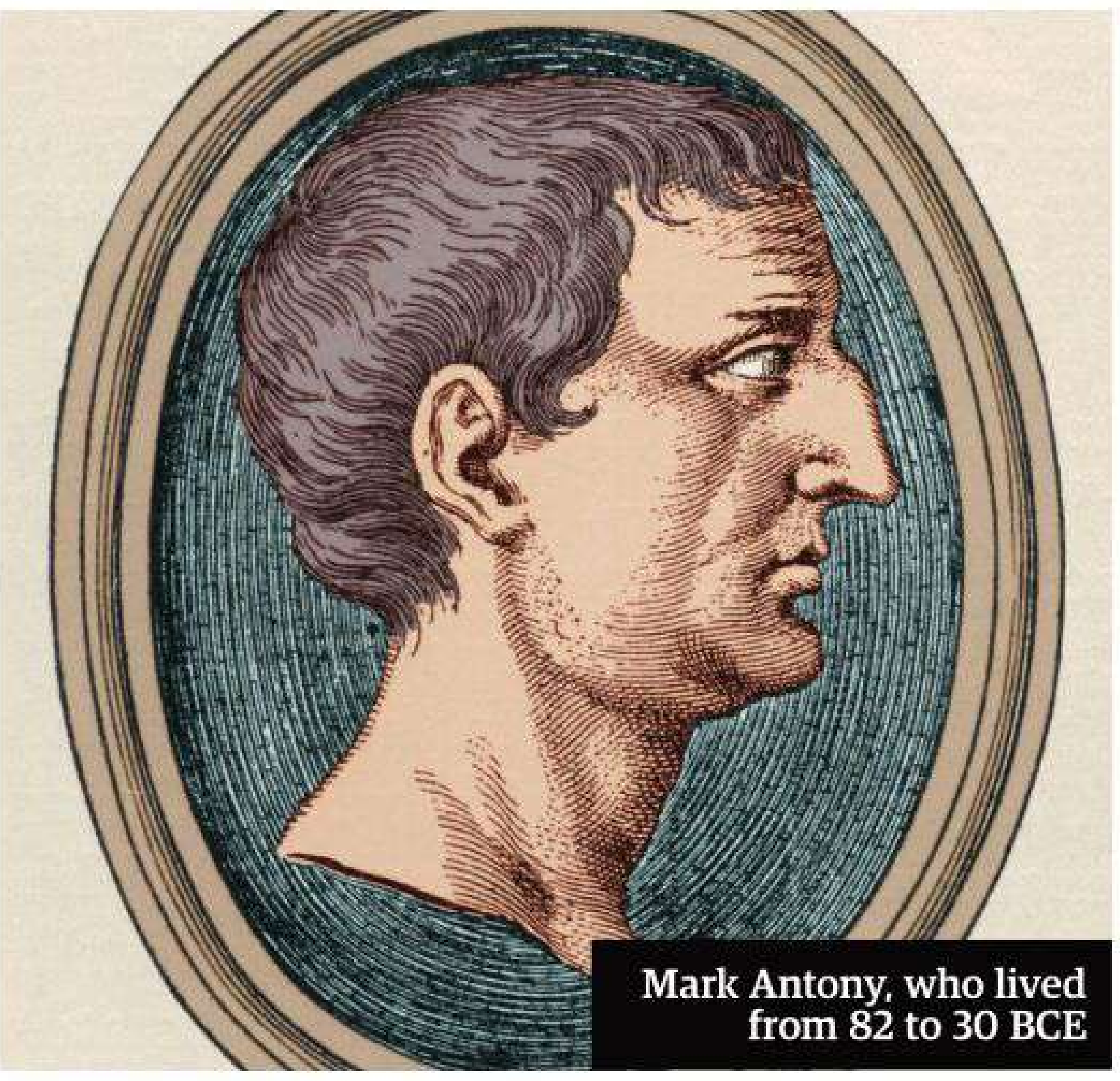
A legal arrangement that paved the way for a revolution

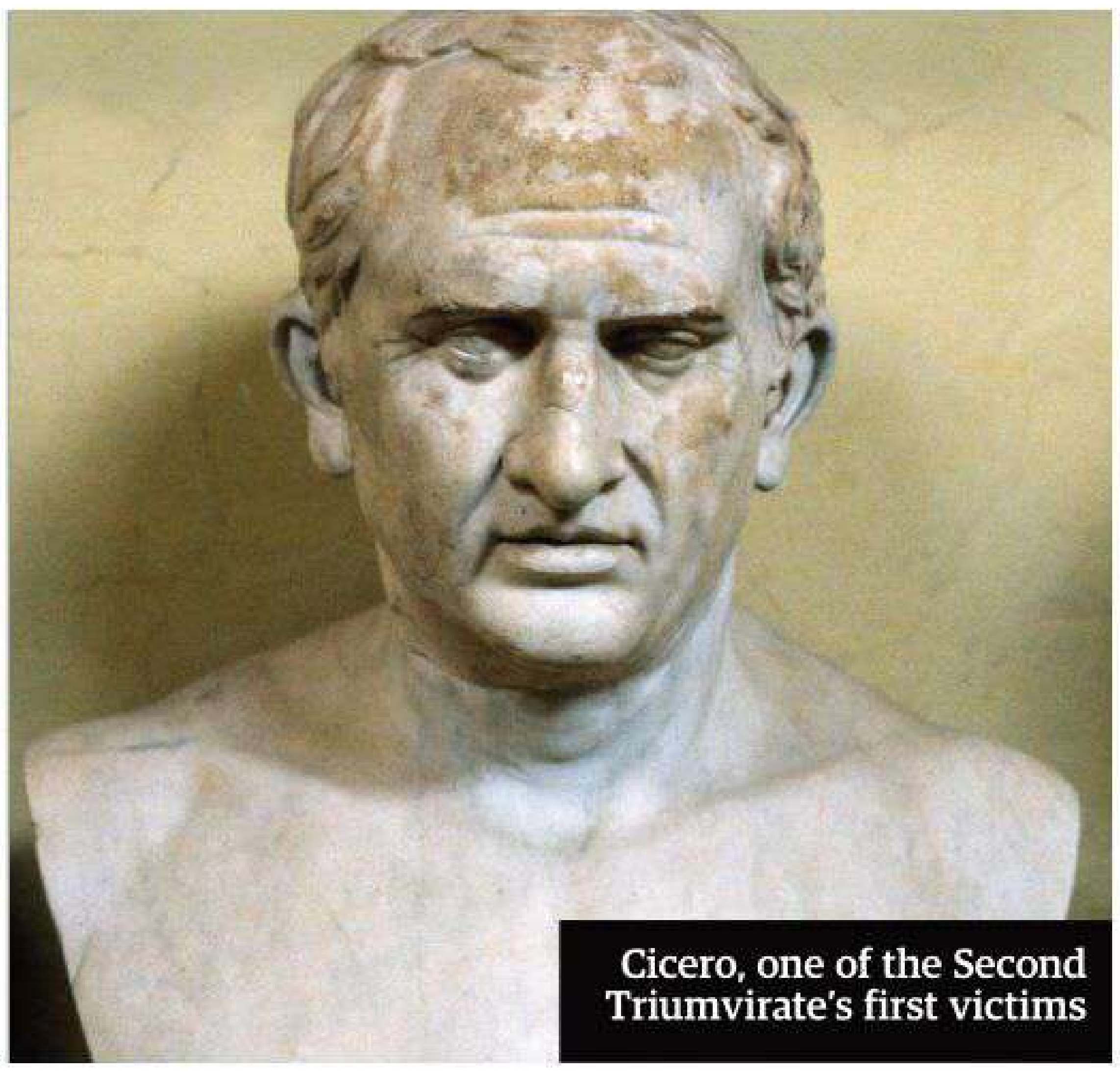
Three men were looking for revenge. In the wake of Julius Caesar's death, Mark Antony, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus and Octavian each vowed to find the murderers and fix the failing government. But banding together wasn't so straightforward. Octavian and Mark Antony had never really seen eye to eye. Both thought of themselves as the rightful heir to the leadership, and Mark Antony made things worse when he cut off Octavian's access to his step-father's money. While Mark Antony controlled the Republic, he made Brutus and Cassius - the two main perpetrators of Caesar's death - the governors of Eastern provinces in order to send them away, but Octavian thought this was too lenient.

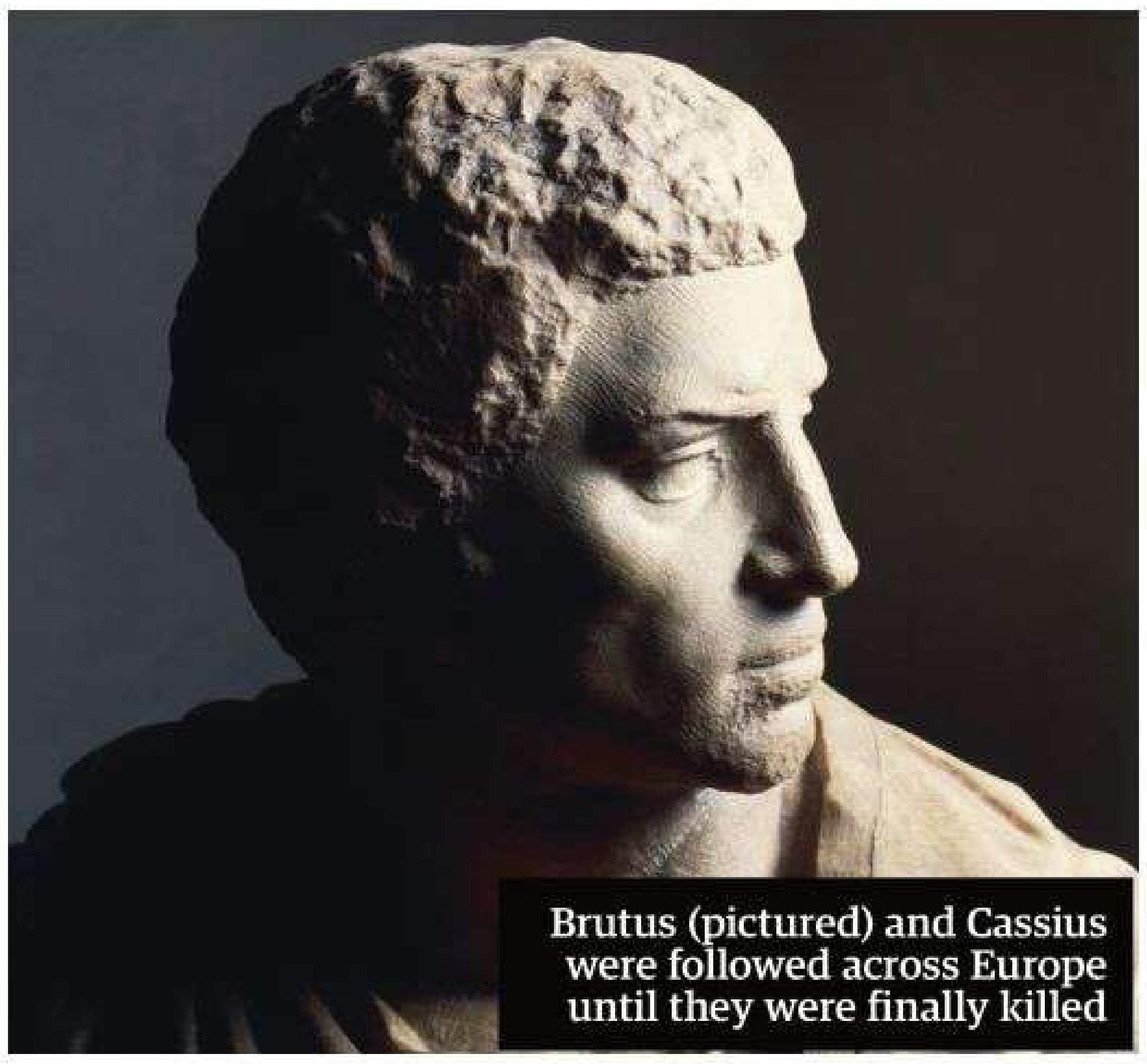
In response, Octavian declared war, and fought Mark Antony at Mutina (present-day Modena) in northern Italy in 43 BCE. After his victory, he marched south to Rome and demanded the consulship - somewhat reminiscent of his adoptive father. It was then that he finally teamed up with Mark Antony, instead of fighting against him. The two of them met near Bononia (modern-day Bologna), along with Lepidus, who had sided with Mark Antony after Caesar's murder, to form the Second Triumvirate Rome was to see in such a short space of time.

However, unlike the First Triumvirate, this one was legally recognised by the Senate with the Lex Titia in November 43 BCE, which gave the men similar power to a consul for five years, although Lepidus would be the actual consul in 42 BCE. The three men could also have laws passed as

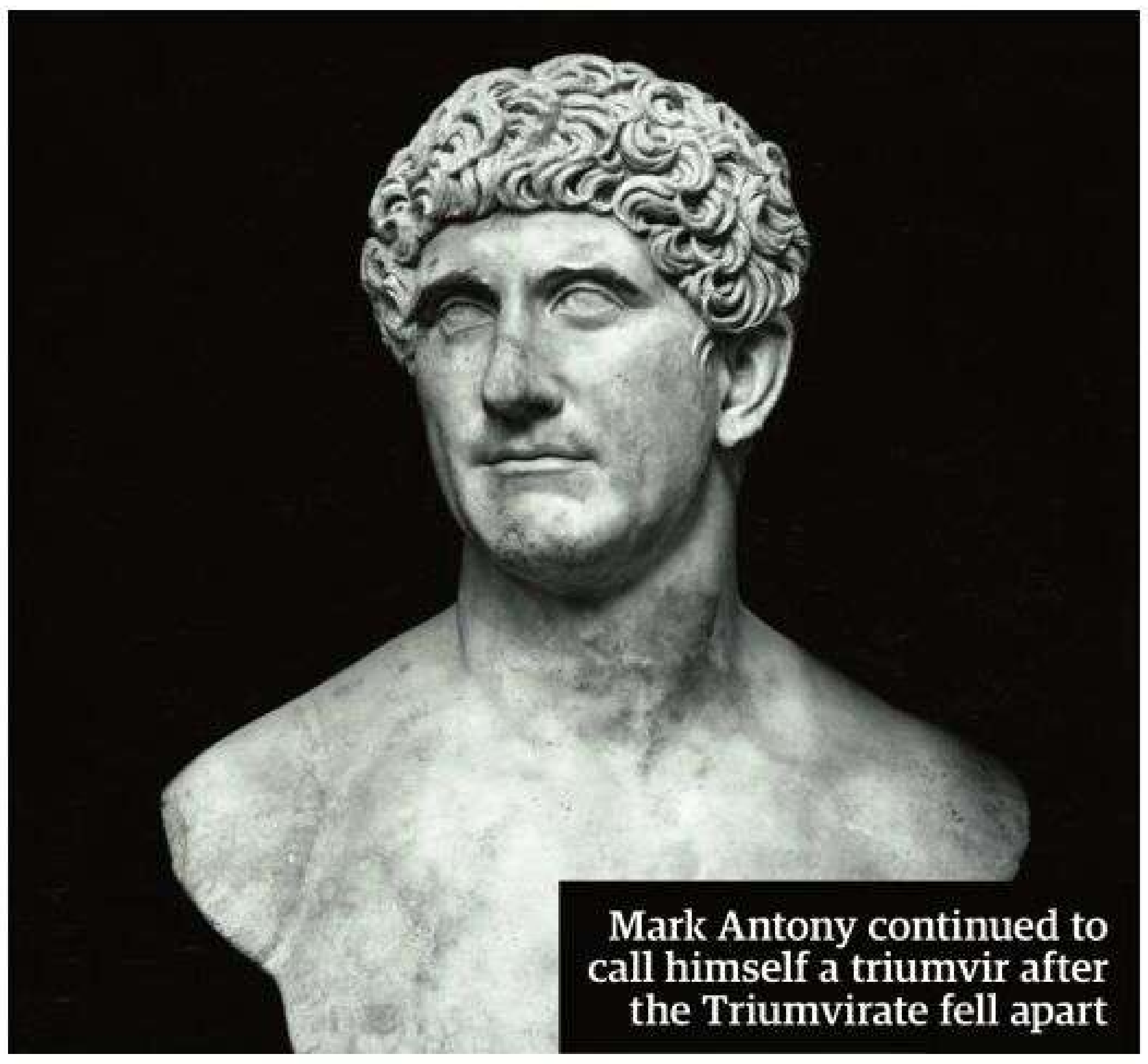

It was at the Battle of Actium when Mark Antony and Octavian faced off for the last time


Mark Antony, who lived from 82 to 30 BCE


Cicero, one of the Second Triumvirate's first victims



Brutus (pictured) and Cassius were followed across Europe until they were finally killed



Mark Antony continued to call himself a triumvir after the Triumvirate fell apart

Octavian used Mark Antony's relationship with Cleopatra against him to garner support from the Senate

they pleased without consulting the Senate. They were also assigned the task of hunting down the conspirators behind Caesar's murder, including Brutus and Cassius. With little intention of granting clemency to anyone, a public decree was soon published, which condemned 300 senators and more than 2,000 equites.

One of those slated for execution was Cicero, although some historians today believe that Octavian had tried to keep him off the list. However, Cicero believed that Mark Antony should have been killed along with Caesar, and so he was one of the first victims of the Triumvirate. He was caught trying to his escape from his villa in Neapolis, and his hands were cut off - punishment for writing scathing poems about Mark Antony - while he was decapitated. His head was sent back to Rome and nailed to the speaker's platform in the forum. Next on the list was Decimus, who had failed to escape with Brutus to Macedonia, and was captured and killed in Gaul.

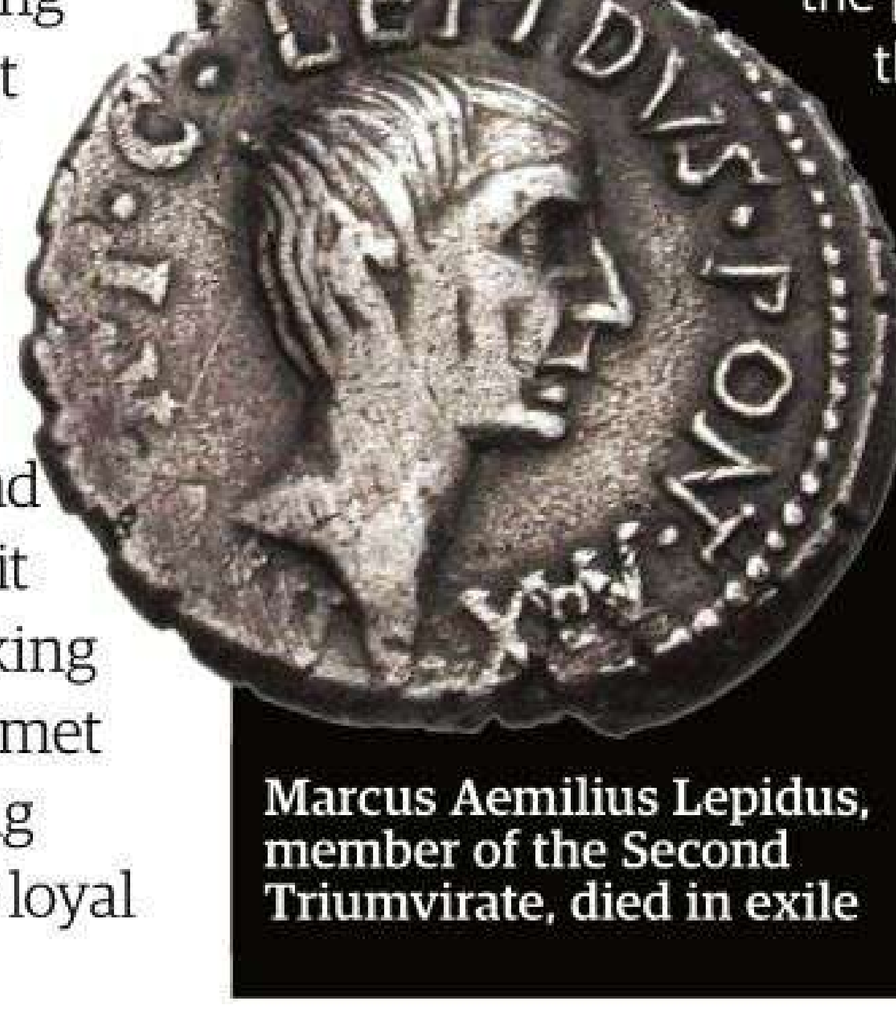
After that, it was time to target Brutus, Cassius and Sextus Pompey, son of Pompey the Great. In June 42 BCE, Brutus and Cassius were killed by Octavian and Mark Antony - Cassius had himself decapitated as he feared battle, while Brutus committed suicide. At the Battle of Philippi, more traitors were killed. Sextus Pompey, meanwhile, escaped to Sicily and managed to make a pact with the Triumvirate.

In 41 BCE, while Mark Antony was in the East, his wife, Fulvia, swirled up a rebellion that Octavian barely managed to suppress. However, he couldn't punish the wife of his ally. Instead, he sent her to join her husband, but she died along the way. September 40 BCE saw a new pact drawn up, and the Republic was split between the Triumvirate. Lepidus was begrudgingly given Africa, while Mark Antony took Octavian's sister, Octavia, as his bride. However, Sextus was causing problems in the Mediterranean. He had won naval dominance in the west and central parts of the sea, while demanding a governorship of Sicily, Corsica, Sardinia and Greece. The Triumvirate had managed to defeat him by 36 BCE, but three had become two. In the legal renewal in 37 BCE, Lepidus had been unceremoniously kicked out. With only Octavian and Mark Antony left, it was beginning to look more and more like the end of the First Triumvirate. While peace was mainly kept for the next five years, in 33 BCE the Triumvirate wasn't renewed, although Mark Antony continued to call himself a triumvir.

Octavian instead became consul himself, and the two went back to being enemies. They split the Republic between them, with Octavian taking the west and Mark Antony the east, where he met Cleopatra, and the consul used that burgeoning relationship to portray his former ally as more loyal to Egypt than Rome. War was coming again.

What happened to Lepidus?

While the rest of Mark Antony and Octavian's lives are very well documented, Lepidus' is less so. As the other two went to war - one more successfully than the other - Lepidus, stripped of all of his power in 36 BCE, was exiled to the town of Circeii, modern-day San Felice Circeo, in Italy, by Octavian. Circeii had the added bonus of being close enough to Rome that Octavian could keep an eye on his former ally. Although he was kicked out of the Triumvirate, Lepidus remained Pontifex Maximus until his peaceful death in 13 BCE, and he was allowed to return to Rome every so often to carry out Senate business. However, Octavian is said to have belittled him by making sure that he always voted last and making fun of him in front of the Senate. It was Lepidus' son who was the problem, though. Lepidus the Younger was part of a conspiracy against Octavian that aimed to assassinate him. Discovered by Gaius Maecenas, Lepidus the Younger was executed - but his father was left alone. Able to live out his last years in peace, Lepidus was perhaps liked more by Octavian than is apparent from his expulsion from the Triumvirate.



Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, member of the Second Triumvirate, died in exile

Antony and Cleopatra, Egyptian Theatre, by Alexis van Hamme

The art of succeeding Caesar

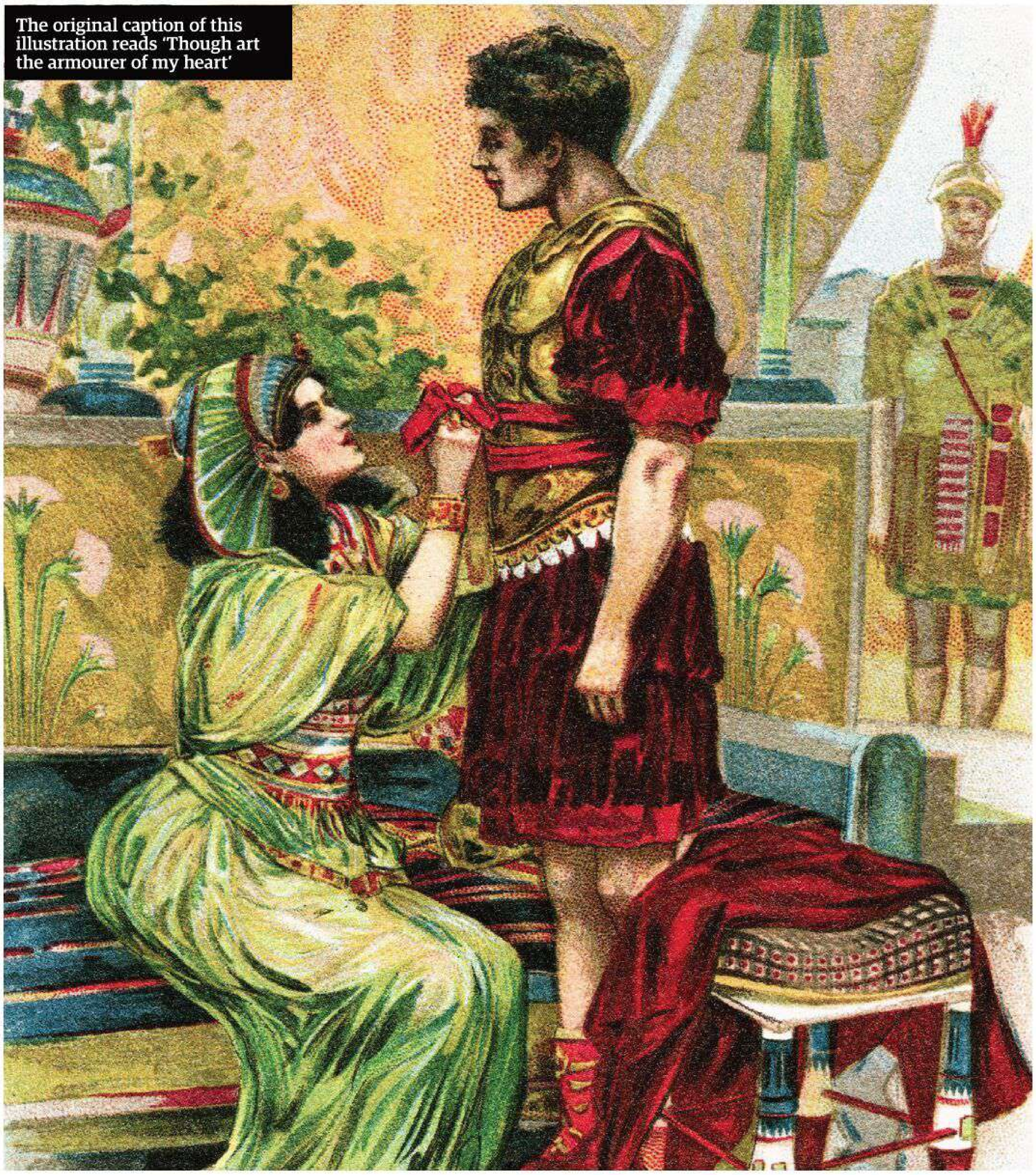
Mark Antony had been the most loyal of Caesar's supporters, but could he carry forward Caesar's legacy and negotiate the obstacles of his own turbulent political career in the wake of the bloody events of 44 BCE?

Mark Antony had become a close and reliable ally of Julius Caesar during the Gallican campaigns, though – at times – Antony's fondness for the good life and his people-pleasing manners did not sit well with his leader. As Plutarch wrote: "his vaunting, his raillery, his drinking in public, sitting down by the men as they were taking their food, and eating, as he stood, off the common soldiers' tables, made him the delight and pleasure of the army." Caesar found such behaviour rather less delightful and, indeed, Antony's sybaritic tendencies would remain a rich vein of propaganda for Antony's enemies, including Octavian, throughout his life. Nonetheless, Antony was a loyal and accomplished military commander in Gaul, playing significant roles in crucial encounters, such as the siege of Alesia during the pan-Gallic rebellion of Vercingetorix, and Caesar was profoundly grateful. He happily supported Antony's ascendancy in Rome's political elite and, as relations between Caesar and Pompey soured, Antony proved to be an agile advocate of Caesar's cause. When civil war was joined between Caesar and Pompey, Antony once more demonstrated his estimable martial skills, taking a leading role, for instance, in Pompey's defeat at the battle of Pharsalus in 48 BCE. As Plutarch explained: "next to Caesar," Antony was always "the man most talked about in the camp."

At times, Antony's lack of political skill aggravated Caesar. He proved less than competent when left in charge of Italian affairs during Caesar's absences in the civil war, and periods of ostracism were not unknown. Still, by the time of Caesar's death in 44 BCE the two men were once more the closest of confidantes, and Antony took it upon himself both to excoriate those who had done away with Caesar and to carry forward the Julian legacy. In the days following Caesar's assassination, Antony feared he might become a target, dressed in the clothes of a slave, and contemplated escape. These fears subsided, however, and Antony was soon back on the public stage. At Caesar's funeral, Antony delivered a powerful oration, and his displaying of Caesar's blood-soaked clothes provoked the citizenry to riot: "When he saw that the people were mightily swayed and charmed by his words, he mingled with his praises sorrow and indignation over the dreadful deed, and at the close of his speech shook on high the garments of the dead, all bloody and tattered by the swords."

The political climate was, unsurprisingly, deeply unstable. Antony made strides in

> "In the days following Caesar's assassination Antony feared he might become a target"



The original caption of this illustration reads 'Though art the armourer of my heart'

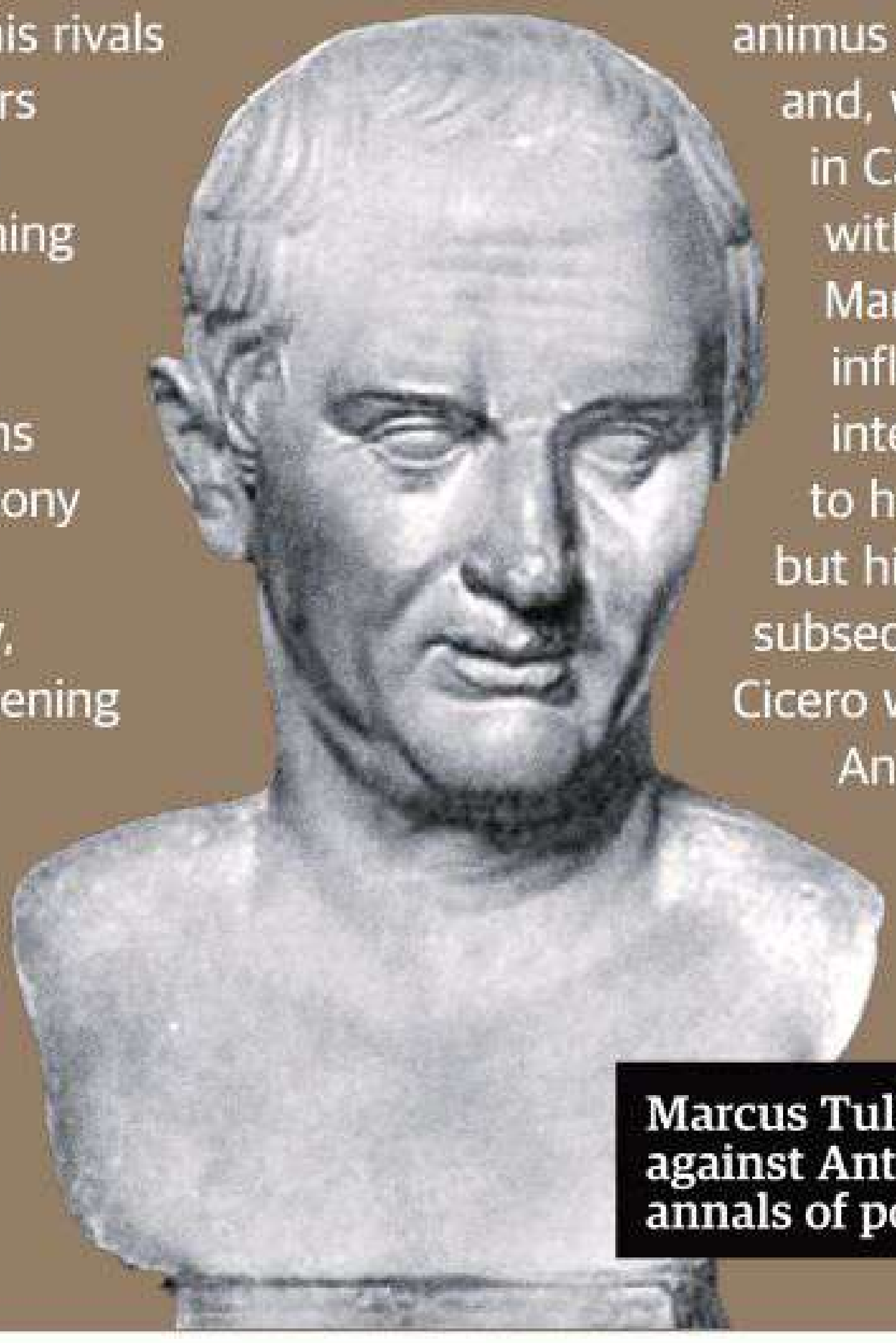
establishing himself as the torch-bearer of Caesar's accomplishments, notably winning the support of Caesar's widow, Calpurina. He had an obvious rival in Octavian, Caesar's adopted son, however, and the two men's struggle over primacy would cast a shadow over the next decades of Roman history. Antony's popularity was far from its zenith at this stage, with suspicions about his dictatorial tendencies much in evidence. Octavian waged a skilful propaganda campaign, the first of many, and Antony, now regarded as a public enemy, headed to the relative safety of Cisalpine Gaul. Military conflict ensued, resulting in Antony's defeat at the Battle of Mutina in 43 BCE, but reconciliation between Antony and Octavian remained a possibility.

Both men recognised that they shared formidable enemies among those who had removed Caesar and, alongside Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, they established the Second Triumvirate in November 43 BCE. Each man was granted his own sphere of influence, with Antony's primary concerns lying in the east. Enemies abounded and, in addition to launching comprehensive purges of the Roman political elite, Octavian and Antony turned their attention to Brutus and Cassius, who had established strongholds in the eastern Mediterranean. Their campaign was crowned by victory at the ferocious Battle of Philippi in 42 BCE. Perhaps 50,000 men perished and, in the battle's wake, Brutus was driven to commit suicide.

The most celebrated chapter in Antony's colourful career began to unfold shortly afterwards, with his arrival in Egypt in 41 BCE. Cleopatra initially declined Antony's summons to attend him, but a grand entrance was finally made at Tarsus. Antony may have had plans to take punitive action against Cleopatra, but he was immediately smitten. The queen, in Plutarch's version of events, opted "to sail up the river Cydnus in a barge with gilded poop, its sails spread purple, its rowers urging it on with silver oars to the sound of the flute blended with pipes and lutes. She herself reclined beneath a canopy spangled with gold, adorned like Venus in a painting, while boys like Loves in paintings stood on either side and fanned her. Likewise also the fairest of her serving-maidens, attired like Nereïds and Graces, were stationed, some at the rudder-sweeps, and others at the reefing-ropes. Wondrous

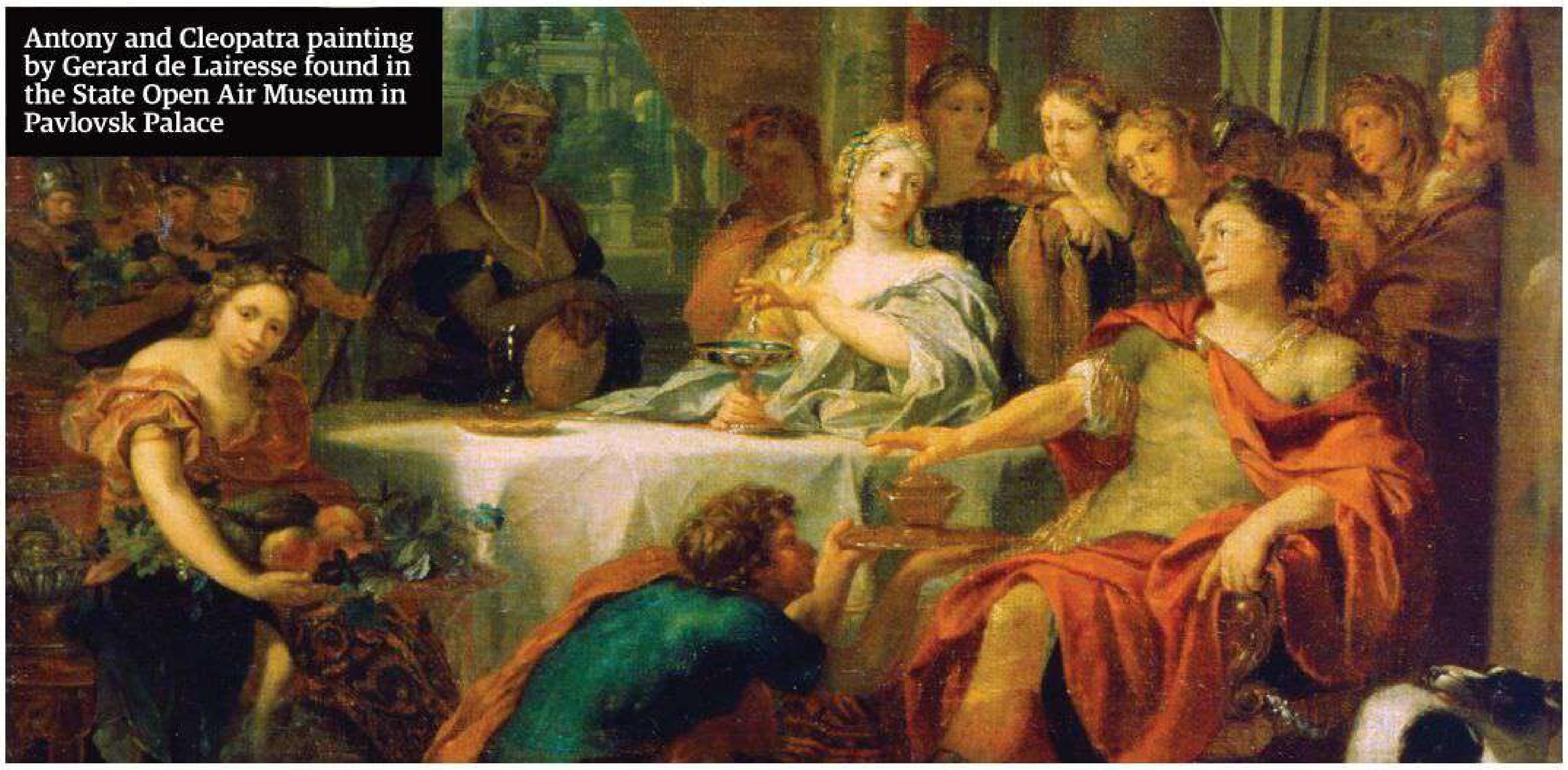
"Antony may have had plans to take punitive action against Cleopatra, but he was immediately smitten"

The chorus of disapproval



Marcus Tullius Cicero, whose speeches against Antony became legendary in the annals of political oratory

As relations between Antony and his rivals continued to deteriorate in the years following Julius Caesar's death, the great orator, Cicero, launched scathing attacks on Antony in a series of 14 speeches known to history as the Philippics. Cicero's list of accusations was staggeringly wide-ranging. Antony and his supporters were arrogantly presuming to hijack Caesar's legacy, Antony was demonstrating overweening ambition, and was a public enemy who deserved to be vanquished, not negotiated with. He was comparable to the worst traitors and conspirators in Roman history, while figures such as Brutus were the true champions of the Republic. Cicero's personal animus against Antony was well known and, while he had played no direct role in Caesar's assassination, his sympathy with the participants in the Ides of March was hardly a secret. As an influential figure, as well as a prized intellectual, Cicero's words did much to harden enmities against Antony, but his success was short-lived. In the subsequent purge of Antony's rivals, Cicero would be beheaded and, upon Antony's specific request, his hands would be cut off. Both head and hands were displayed, for all to see, in Rome's forum.



Antony and Cleopatra painting by Gerard de Lairesse found in the State Open Air Museum in Pavlovsk Palace

odours from countless incense-offerings diffused themselves along the river-banks."

It was quite the sight to behold but, for Plutarch, it was the birth of a deeply damaging infatuation. "As a crowning evil" he wrote, Antony's "love for Cleopatra supervened, roused and drove to frenzy many of the passions that were still hidden and quiescent in him, and dissipated and destroyed whatever good and saving qualities still offered resistance." It was a sentiment shared by many of Antony's Roman peers at the time.

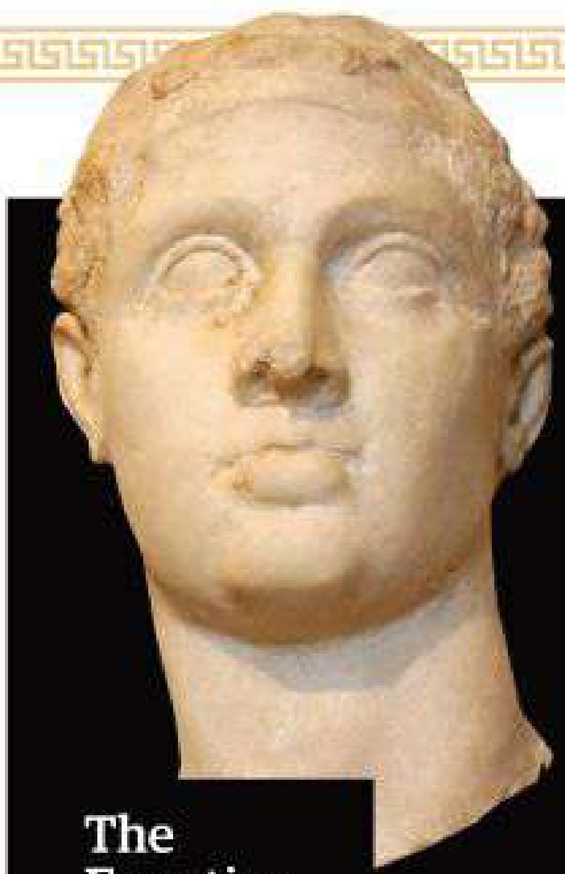
Though already married to Fulvia, Antony swiftly began an affair with Cleopatra and, in short measure, two children resulted: Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene. A third, Ptolemy Philadelphus, followed four years later. Needless to say, Fulvia was, from the outset, dismayed by her errant husband's antics, but continued to press his cause in Rome, perhaps with the hope of luring him home from Egypt. An estimable politician in her own right, Fulvia fiercely criticised many of Octavian's policies, and these manoeuvres resulted in military engagement. Antony was not impressed and refused to intervene. The prospect of direct conflict between Antony and Octavian was still palpable, however, though both men retained a keen sense of their shared, if always contingent, political interests. Fulvia's death helped to calm the waters, and the men were duly reconciled: the reaffirmation of their compact being sealed by Antony's marriage to Octavian's sister, Octavia.

Aside from his liaisons with Cleopatra, Antony busied himself during these years in the east with a broad range of duties. From various residences, including Athens and Ephesus, he played, with some skill, the delicate political chess game of maintaining alliances and supporting or undermining leaders within Rome's client kingdoms. Military and diplomatic matters also intervened, notably attempting to reach some compromise with Sextus, the son of Pompey the Great, who continued to menace Rome from his base in Sicily, and helping Herod to establish his authority in Judaea. The intrusions of Orodes II of Parthia, first into Syria and onwards to the Euphrates, also demanded an uncompromising response, though Antony's strategies yielded mixed results, ranging from stunning of fleeting victories in battle to moments of humiliating retreat.

Egypt was always the fulcrum of Antony's concerns, however, and back in Rome, concerns about the spell being cast by Cleopatra mounted. There was talk of Antony plotting to become Rome's sole ruler and dismay when Antony began to hand out territories to his and Cleopatra's children. Rome did not enjoy being snubbed, and there was great consternation when, in the wake of memorable victories in Armenia, Antony failed to make a customary visit to Italy to celebrate his triumph. Instead, he launched festivities in Alexandria with Cleopatra at his side.

Most provocatively of all, news spread of Antony supporting the notion that Caesarion, Caesar's child with Cleopatra, was the true heir to his father's legacy. Octavian was understandably appalled, and another round of civil strife then loomed on the horizon. Octavian declared war on Cleopatra and, at the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE his forces under Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa secured a famous victory. Minor skirmishes followed, but Octavian's triumph was assured. The personal tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra culminated in their suicides and, by 27 BCE, Octavian – now unchallenged for primacy – became the first of the Roman emperors.

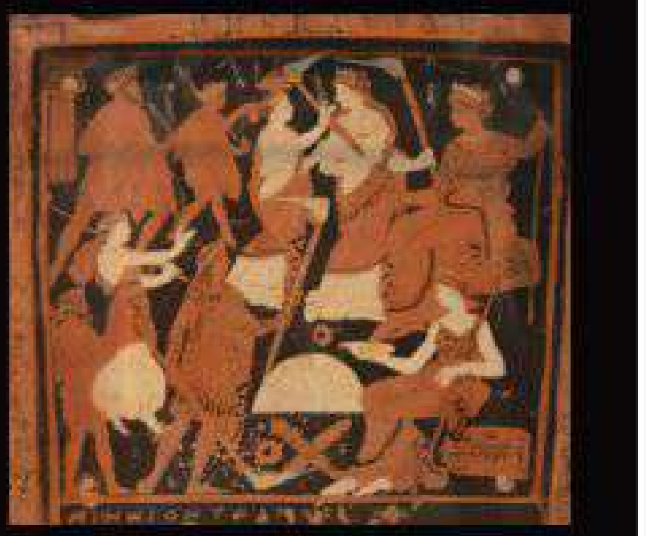
Judgements of Antony would often be harsh. For Plutarch, he was a man addicted to pleasure, debilitated by a "simplicity in his nature, and slowness of perception." His life had been "swashbuckling and boastful, full of empty exultation and distorted ambition." There was some truth in this, but even Plutarch was able to appreciate Antony's gifts. He had been a generous friend and "was better endowed by nature than any man of his time for leading an army by force of eloquence." He was also, lest we forget, often in the thick of the many battles that ensued. The political fights were sometimes even harder to win.



The Egyptian ruler and Cleopatra's father, Ptolemy XII

The love affair between Antony and Cleopatra was one for the ages, but it has been suggested by some historians that the pair may have encountered each other earlier in life, when Antony was serving in military campaigns in the East. A meeting involving Cleopatra's father and Caesar's agent at Ephesus may have provided the occasion – Cleopatra would have been 14 at the time.

Antony secured a reputation for enjoying cultural encounters during his time in the eastern Mediterranean. Religious practices held particular appeal, and Antony was fascinated by everything from temples devoted to Apollo to the secretive Eleusinian Mysteries dedicated to Demeter and Persephone. It was a rather fitting interest for a man welcomed by some in the region as the new Dionysus.

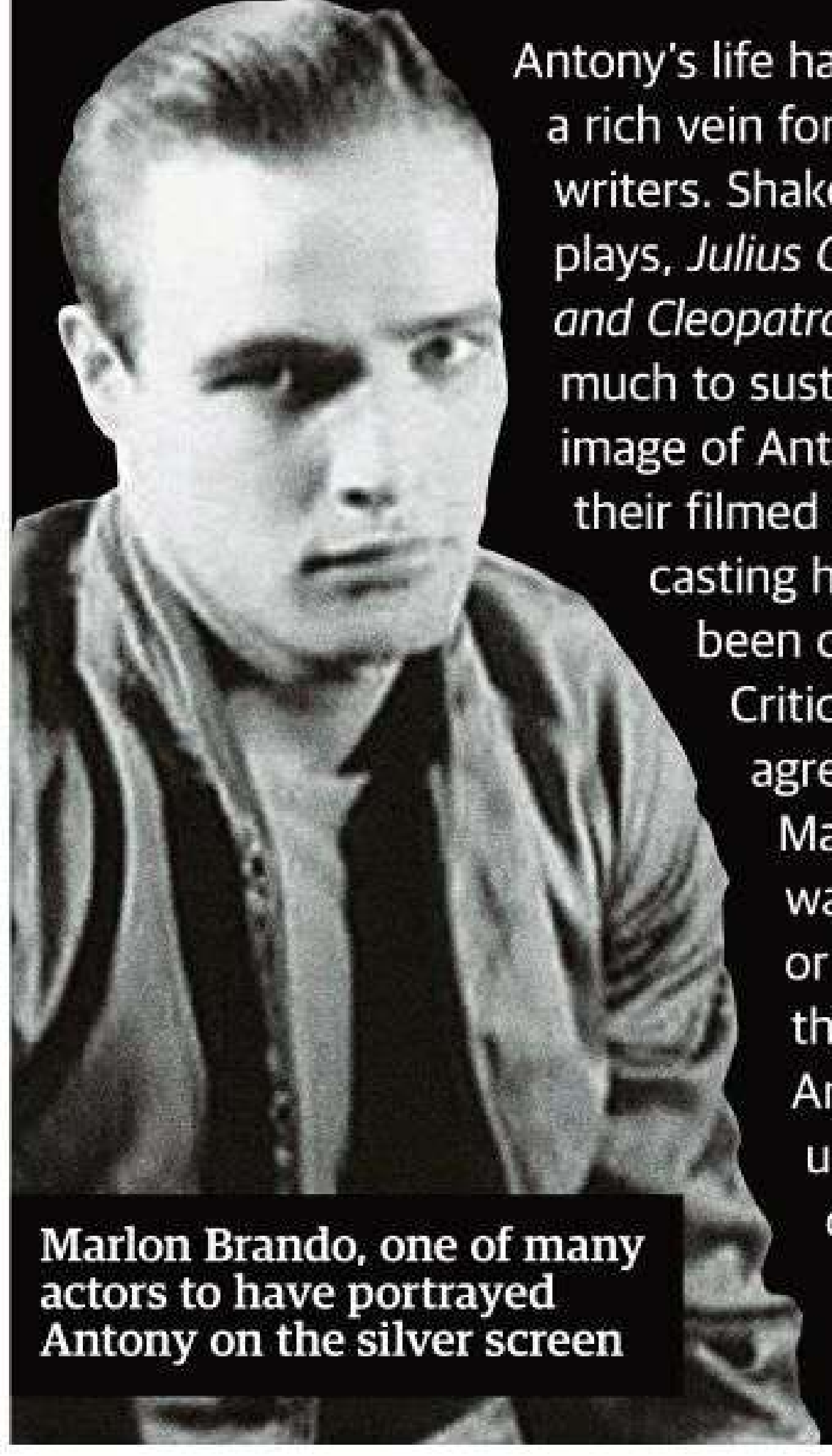


A depiction of the Eleusinian Mysteries into which Antony was allegedly initiated

Antony had seven children by three wives. Following Antony's suicide the eldest, Antyllus, was put to death but the others were taken in by Octavia. Antony's later descendants would play starring roles in Roman history. Plutarch described one of them, Nero, in decidedly unflattering terms: "He killed his mother, and by his folly and madness came near to subverting the Roman empire. He was the fifth in descent from Antony." Plutarch is perhaps hinting that a talent for causing chaos was in the genes.

The Emperor Nero, one of Antony's less popular descendants

Antony's life has always provided a rich vein for artists and writers. Shakespeare's two plays, *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, have done much to sustain a specific image of Antony, though in their filmed versions, the casting has sometimes been controversial. Critics still fail to agree over whether Marlon Brando was magnificent or disastrous in the 1953 classic. Antony also had the unalloyed honour of being portrayed by Sid James in *Carry On Cleo*.



Marlon Brando, one of many actors to have portrayed Antony on the silver screen

Like father, like son?

Octavian was to become the first emperor of the Roman Empire – but getting there was going to be a challenge

The future first emperor of Rome was brought up during civil war. Born in 63 BCE to a relatively obscure patrician family, the silver lining was that he was related to the Caesars. His mother, Atai, was Julius Caesar's niece, and after the death of his father, Octavian was raised by his grandmother, who was Caesar's sister, Julia Minor.

It wasn't until 47 BCE that Octavian and the great Julius Caesar met. Aged 16, it was time for Octavian to don the Roman toga and become a man. Using family connections, he managed to take on responsibilities, and one of them was going to help his great-uncle Caesar fight in Hispania. However, his journey went somewhat awry when he became shipwrecked on the way there, and he had to cross enemy territory to reach his destination.

> Using family connections, he managed to take on responsibilities, and one of them was going to help his great-uncle Caesar fight in Hispania.

Caesar was so impressed with his grand-nephew's tenacity and spirit that he named him his political successor and the heir to his estates. During the process, he also adopted Octavian as his son. The Caesar name came with power and military might – two things that Octavian didn't want to squander. But Caesar was preoccupied with the civil war in the run-up to his death in 44 BCE, and so it is unlikely that the two men spent much time together.

Everything changed for Octavian in 44 BCE. When he heard the news of his great-uncle and adoptive father's murder, he had been in Illyricum, preparing to join him on a campaign to Parthia, and to say he was distraught would be an understatement. But as his family tried to make him go into hiding as he was Caesar's heir, a stronger emotion broke out – anger. He headed to Brundisium in southern Italy, where a large number of troops were waiting.

From this point on, Octavian made use of the Caesar name – what better way to advertise his legitimacy? He went from the unknown to centre stage, and many of the troops he'd found joined his cause. His forces only grew as he neared Rome. Outside the gates with his army, he demanded to be made a consul – exactly as Caesar had done before him. But the newest problem was that Mark Antony had taken control in the capital, and he paid no attention to the young Octavian. In fact, he even blocked having Octavian's adoption officially recognised, and prevented him from standing for office. But as Caesar had shown in 60 BCE when he was up against Cato's faction, the Senate could be brought around.

After months of rising tensions, Octavian had had enough. He managed to bribe two of Mark Antony's four legions to join his side, and was ready to march to Mutina where Mark Antony was besieging Decimus Brutus. He and Hirtius attacked Antony on 21 April 43 BCE, and Octavian showed military prowess, intervening when his partner was killed and overcoming Mark Antony's forces. His enemy fled over the Alps, and Octavian was now a

Augustus as Pontifex Maximus, with his head covered and wearing the priest's toga

All about Augustus

Banished family

When the ruler found out that Augustus' only child, Julia, had been sleeping with men out of wedlock – including one of Mark Antony's sons – he had her exiled to Ventotene and they never saw each other again.

The Roman wife

Augustus' third wife, Livia, served as the archetypal Roman woman and wife. However, Livia was set on ensuring that her son from another marriage would rule after Augustus, and she succeeded – Tiberius ruled from 14 CE.

Famous last words

On his deathbed, Augustus' last words were reportedly: "I found Rome a city of clay but left it a city of marble." While the emperor had achieved this, his wife said his last words were: "Have I played the part well? Then applaud as I exit."

Augustus' mausoleum

Augustus built his tomb in 28 BCE. It's also home to the remains of Agrippa, Octavia Minor and Livia, and emperors Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nerva.

The Temple of Augustus in Pula was bombed by the Allies in World War II but it was reconstructed in 1947

The new gods

One strong similarity between father and adoptive son was that both were worshipped as gods after their deaths. Of course, Octavian had been one of those pushing for Caesar's deification, and had the Temple of Divus Iulius built in 42 BCE, and it was dedicated on 18 August 29 BCE after the victory at Actium. With Octavian being the son of a god, the worship of the imperial cult was beginning.

After his death, Augustus himself became a god. The Temple of Divus Augustus was originally built in 37 BCE and was restored in the 2nd century CE. Several other temples dedicated to him were built all over the Roman Empire after his death, but one was built before. The Temple of Augustus in Pula, in modern-day Croatia, was completed before his death in 14 CE.

When Augustus was burned on his funeral pyre, an eagle was released and soared into the sky. A senator later claimed that he had seen the soul of the emperor rise up to the heavens in much the same way, and a week after the funeral it was confirmed that Augustus would be worshipped as a god. His wife, Livia, was appointed his priest.

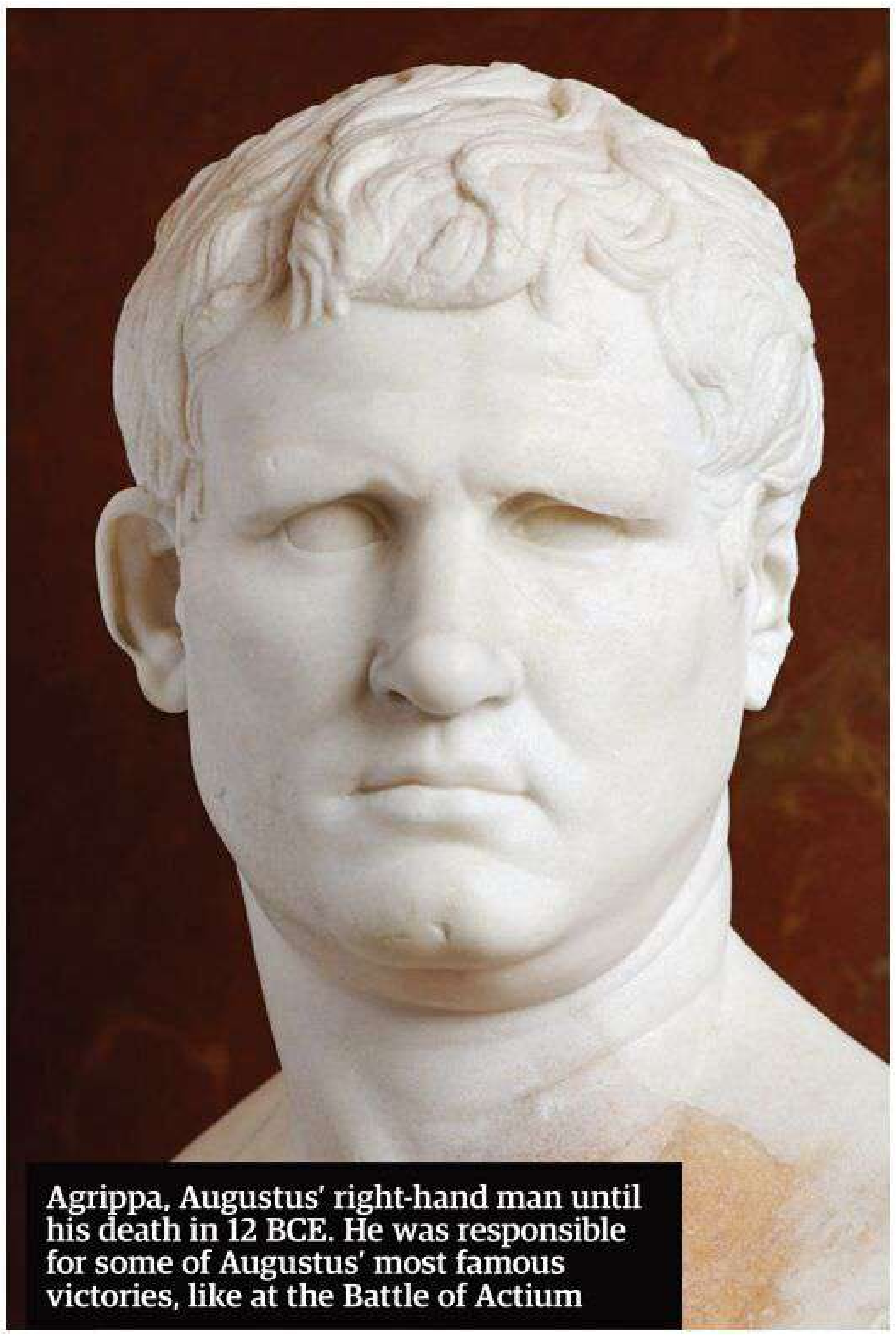
key player in Roman politics, having achieved this through battle, much like his adoptive father.

On 1 January 42 BCE, the Senate set a new precedent - he deified his great-uncle. When Caesar had died, a comet had been seen in the sky, immediately dubbed Caesar's comet - but to a people that believed in omens, it wasn't just a celestial body. Octavian announced that the comet was his adoptive father going to join the gods, and less than two years later, the Senate ratified it. Octavian could now call himself divi filius - son of a god. What better political tool? However, his anger hadn't gone away. When the Second Triumvirate was formed with his former enemy, Mark Antony, and his friend, Lepidus, it was with one main goal in mind: to find and kill the conspirators who were responsible for Caesar's death. So that's what they did. Between them they travelled across Rome's territories to do battle at Philippi and in Sicily, among other places. But all good things must come to an end, and Mark Antony and Octavian inevitably fell out. Another civil war was looming, and it looked like a Caesar would be on one side yet again. While Mark Antony was living in Egypt and openly shunning Octavian's sister, who was supposed to be his wife, Octavian used it to his advantage. If his enemy was spending so much time in Egypt with Cleopatra, did that mean he wanted to overthrow Octavian? Many believed that Mark Antony had become lovesick for the Egyptian queen and wanted to defeat Octavian and move to the capital, Alexandria. What made matters significantly worse was that Mark Antony recognised Caesarion, Caesar and Cleopatra's son, as 'King of Kings', and Cleopatra as 'Queen of Kings', and began splitting up the Eastern empire under the two and his own children.

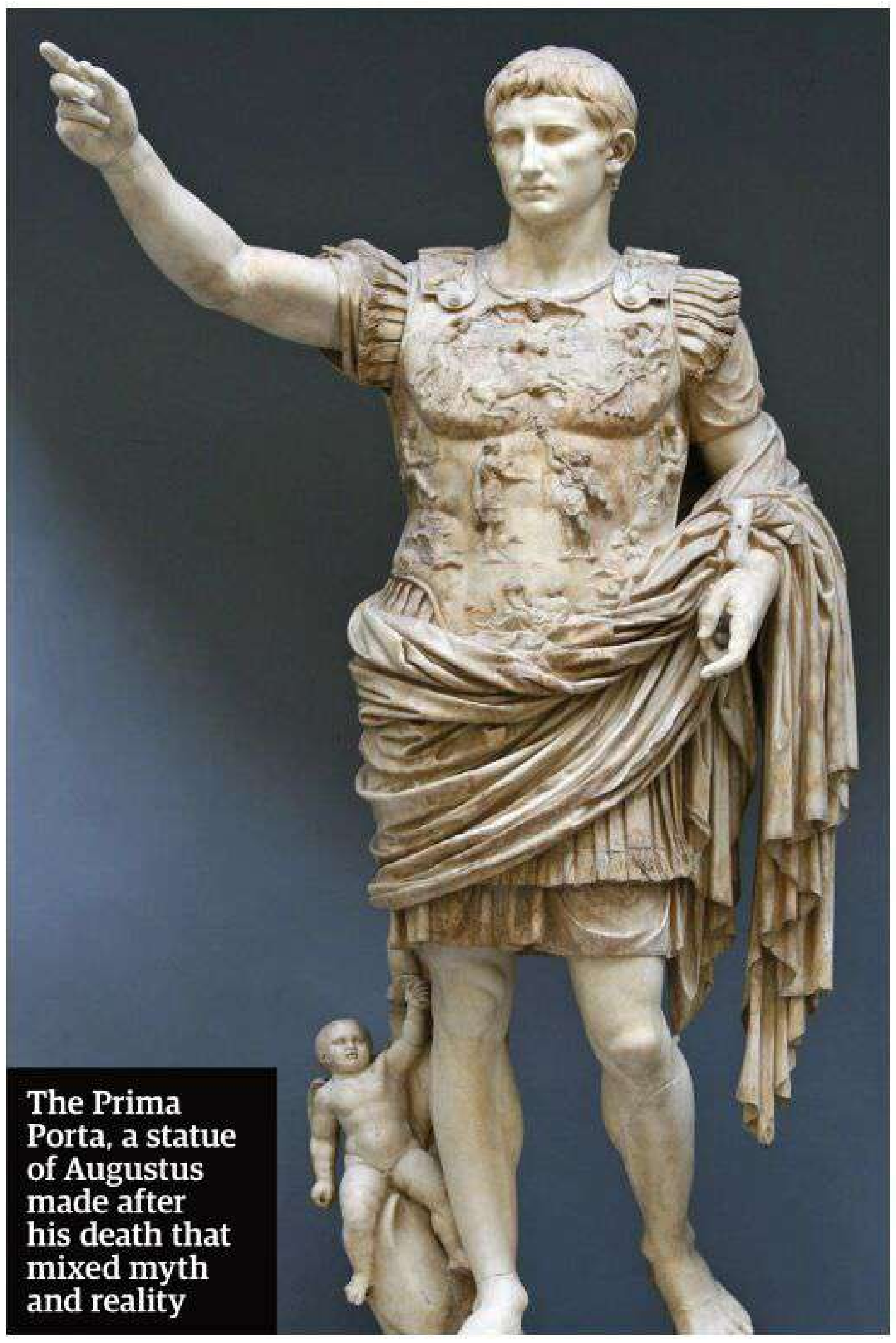
To counter Mark Antony's seemingly heretical actions, Octavian promoted Agrippa, his right-hand man, to aedile in 33 BCE, and they began to restore many of Rome's faults that had been forgotten during the years of civil war. They fixed the sewer system and the water supply, while constructing new buildings to make the streets look great once again. His plan succeeded - Octavian managed to paint himself as a Caesar who cared about Rome, just as Julius had done before him.

When Mark Antony divorced Octavia, that was it. Octavian had the Senate declare war on Cleopatra, and the final battle for Rome began. East and West went head to head. At the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE, the Egyptian ships got blocked by Octavian's fleet that was under the command of Agrippa, who was a much better military leader than his superior. Cleopatra and Mark Antony fled back to Egypt where they both committed suicide, and the remaining Egyptian forces immediately defected to the other side. It couldn't have gone any better. With Octavian the undisputed ruler of Rome, he had Caesarion and Mark Antony's eldest son, Antyllus, executed, and made Egypt a Roman province in 30 BCE. Caesarion was supposedly strangled, and Octavian apparently told him: "Two Caesars are one too many." With his position now secure, and the possible pretenders dealt with, it was time to organise Rome. Everyone knew that the old system wouldn't work.

After returning from the East, Octavian had his triumph through the streets of Rome in August 29 BCE, and settled large amounts of veterans in Italy and the provinces with little to no fuss - perhaps he had now superseded his adoptive father, who had nothing but trouble from the Senate when he had tried to resettle Pompey the Great's veterans.

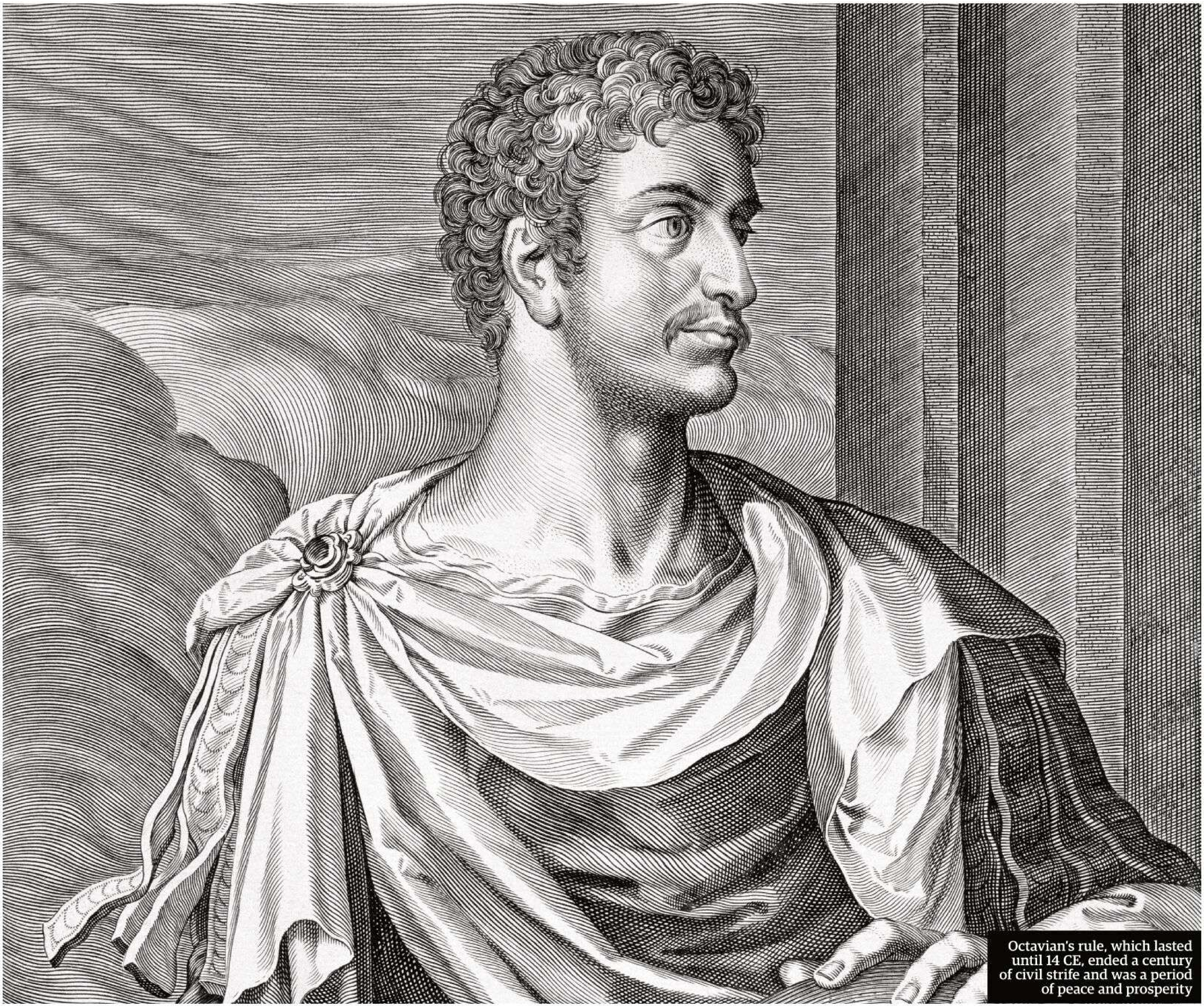


Agrippa, Augustus' right-hand man until his death in 12 BCE. He was responsible for some of Augustus' most famous victories, like at the Battle of Actium



The Prima Porta, a statue of Augustus made after his death that mixed myth and reality

While Caesar wrote a lot to promote himself, Augustus had others write about him. The *Aeneid* charted his heritage back to the hero Aeneas fleeing Troy



Octavian's rule, which lasted until 14 CE, ended a century of civil strife and was a period of peace and prosperity

What shocked the Senate most was that Octavian rejected being in power in 29 BCE. Of course, this was mostly for show – the Senate all but begged, and the leader put on a show of reluctantly accepting. He had the Senate on his side. But he'd learned from his adoptive father's mistakes – he needed to keep them happy.

Unlike his great-uncle, this is something he managed to do throughout his entire rule. In 27 BCE, the Senate granted him the title of 'Augustus', which he then began to use instead of Octavian, and he was given more power over the years – he didn't have to seize it like those before him. He was appointed the overseer of Rome's grain supply in 22 BCE, and the year before that he'd been given the right to call a Senate. They also kept renewing his lone rule.

When Lepidus finally died in 13 BCE, Augustus took the title of Pontifex Maximus, like Caesar had proudly been. It seemed fitting that the son of a god was now the holiest man in what would later become known as the empire. Of course, Augustus wanted to avoid the idea of kings, as it had ended in turmoil before – what he promoted was the revitalisation of the Republic. In 2 BCE, Augustus was also bestowed the title of Pater Patriae – Father of the Country. Caesar's influence can undoubtedly be seen throughout Augustus' reign. Both wanted to rebuild Rome and make it something greater with libraries, theatres and temples. Caesar had also wanted to become the ultimate patron – something that Augustus succeeded in achieving. Most importantly, both had wanted to expand the borders. Would Caesar have been able to achieve this had he lived?

One thing that both Caesars were definitely fond of, though, was propaganda. Caesar made sure he wrote about his military campaigns, and Augustus commissioned the Res Gestae Divi Augusti towards the end of his life. Etched into the massive structure was basically the story of his life and reign, and the title highlighted his godly heritage. The idea of Caesar's comet also came into play, as some of the coins Augustus had minted had the comet on the back. If there was one thing Augustus would revisit again and again, it was the fact that he was descended from Divus Iulius, or divine Julius. It's hard to quantify how much Caesar would have done had he lived – his situation would have been different to Augustus', and it can be strongly argued that Augustus only achieved what he did because of how long he lived – and the fact that he used Caesar's name and deification to catapult himself to power. What can't be argued is that without Caesar there would have been no Augustus. Without Augustus, what would have happened to Rome?

Caesar has been an inspiration to artists, film-makers and writers, like Joseph Court, who in 1827 painted his death

The man and the myth

As Caesar's assassins wiped the blood from their daggers, little could they have imagined how their victim's name would echo through history

In his book *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, the ancient Roman historian Suetonius wrote of Julius Caesar's assassins that "scarcely any of those who were accessory to his murder, survived him more than three years, or died a natural death". Some, like Brutus and Gaius Cassius, both chief instigators of the murderous plot, committed suicide, and others, such as Decimus Brutus, were caught and executed by soldiers loyal to the slain Caesar.

They had only themselves to blame. In the immediate aftermath of their crime, the enormity of what they had done seemed to paralyse their minds, minds that had failed to adequately plan for the uproar that would inevitably erupt once news of Caesar's death broke. Brutus was one of many of the estimated 60 plotters who believed that the rest of the Senate would accord them a standing ovation and then go and proclaim the good news to a favourable public. But these senators knew how the people regarded Caesar: as an idol.

The senators not involved in the tyrannicide fled, and according to some accounts, their flight panicked the plotters, who in turn retreated to Capitoline Hill. Other historians say that the killers of Caesar, with Brutus at their head, went out onto the streets to explain what they had done and why. There was disagreement among the plotters, who called themselves Liberatores ('the Liberators'), about what should be done with Caesar now he was dead; their division hastened their downfall. So did the fact that they didn't do to Mark Antony what they had done to Caesar. Instead, the loyal general was able to quietly slip out of Rome dressed as a slave.

In letting Mark Antony live, the plotters gave the dead dictator's supporters a rallying figure, someone to turn to as they sought retribution.

In letting Antony live, the plotters gave the dead dictator's supporters a rallying figure, someone to turn to as they sought retribution. According to Suetonius, "the conspirators meant to drag [Caesar's] body into the Tiber as soon as they had killed him," but instead they allowed three of his slaves to carry their master's bloodied corpse to his house, where it was handed over to his grieving wife and family. The conspirators had intended to seize all of Caesar's property but they were unnerved by the flight of the Senate, assailed by incipient doubt as to the wisdom of the action. If they had acted with alacrity they might have succeeded in their coup, but their indecisiveness handed the initiative to Mark Antony and his followers.

Caesar's father-in-law, Lucius Piso, lost no time in retrieving from the Vestal Virgins (a body of priestesses that oversaw state rituals) the will of the dead dictator. This would prove crucial. Had the plotters seized the will first they could have destroyed it and acted as they wished.

Rank incompetence was then compounded by the gross miscalculation of allowing Antony to give the eulogy at Caesar's funeral. Cassius thought it unwise but Brutus, perhaps at some level wishing to atone for his part in the killing of his mentor, declared that the people required the opportunity to honour the memory of their former leader.

On 16 March, the day after Caesar's murder, the Senate, their nerve restored, convened to discuss the next course of action. On the same day Antony returned to Rome, no longer dressed as a slave but in his general's uniform, and on visiting Caesar's family he took custody of his will and the rest of his personal correspondence.

When Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, Caesar's master of horse and another faithful follower, informed Antony that he was ready to crush the plotters with his 6,000 soldiers, he was told to stand down. Antony didn't want a civil war, plus a plan of his own had already formed in his mind.

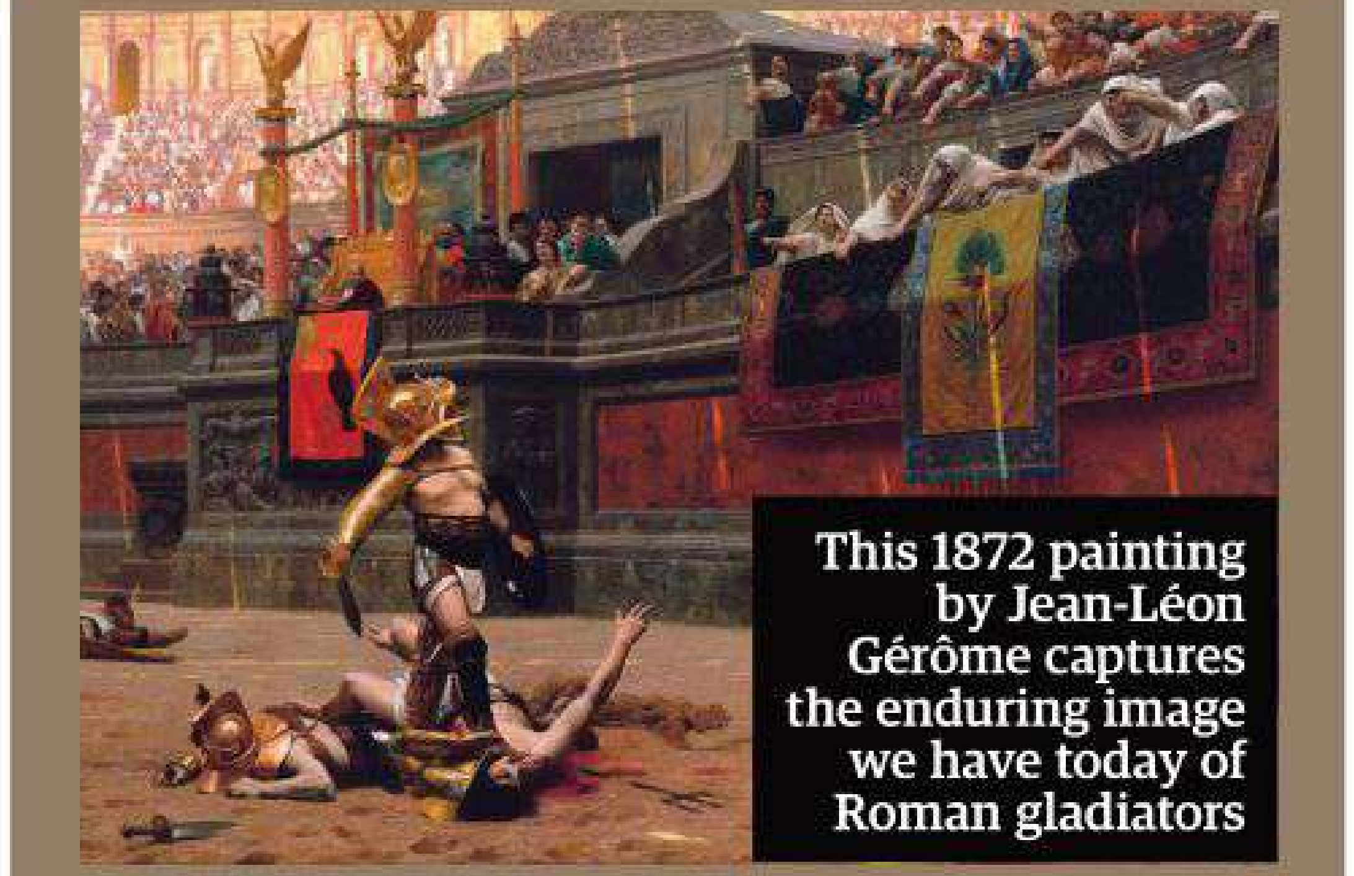
Suetonius recorded that Antony opened Caesar's will at his house. It had been made the previous September and, as was the Roman custom, deposited in the custody of the Vestal Virgins. In the will, wrote Suetonius, Caesar "named three heirs, the grandsons of his sisters; namely, Gaius Octavius [subsequently known as the Emperor Augustus] for three fourths of his estate, and Lucius Pinarius and Quintus Pedius for the remaining fourth. Other heirs [in remainder] were named at the close of the will, in which he also adopted Gaius Octavian, who was to assume his name, into his family... as well as Decimus Brutus amongst his heirs of the second order. He bequeathed to the Roman people his gardens near the Tiber, and 300 sesterces each man."

Meanwhile at the Senate the debate was stormy. Lepidus declared that the assassins' crime must not go unpunished, but Cicero, like Antony, said Rome must be saved from another civil war. Recognising the threat posed by Lepidus' strident demands for vengeance, the Senate wisely drew the sting from his belligerent rhetoric by upholding all of Caesar's laws, among them the distribution of money and property to his soldiers in recognition of their service. In honouring the promises made by Caesar to his soldiers – allotting them land in places such as Carthage and Corinth – the Senate deprived Lepidus of the opportunity to foment sedition among his army.

The fact Caesar had surprisingly named as his primary heir his 18-year-old great nephew Octavian doubtless encouraged the assassins to believe they had weathered the storm. Nonetheless, the Senate decided it would be wise if the men who killed Caesar were removed from the city so as not to inflame the passion of the people. Brutus was appointed provincial governor of Crete; Cassius was given Africa; and Decimus Brutus was dispatched to Cisalpine Gaul.

What the Senate hadn't bargained for was the cunning of Mark Antony. Surprised and dismayed that Caesar had named Octavian as his heir, he set out to exploit the youth's naivety and inexperience. According to the ancient Roman historian Cassius Dio [155–235 CE], once Antony had Caesar's will he "made many erasures and many substitutions, inserting laws as well as other matters".

Antony's immediate concern was to wrest power away from the Senate and the assassins, which he did with a performance of brilliant melodrama at


This 1872 painting by Jean-Léon Gérôme captures the enduring image we have today of Roman gladiators

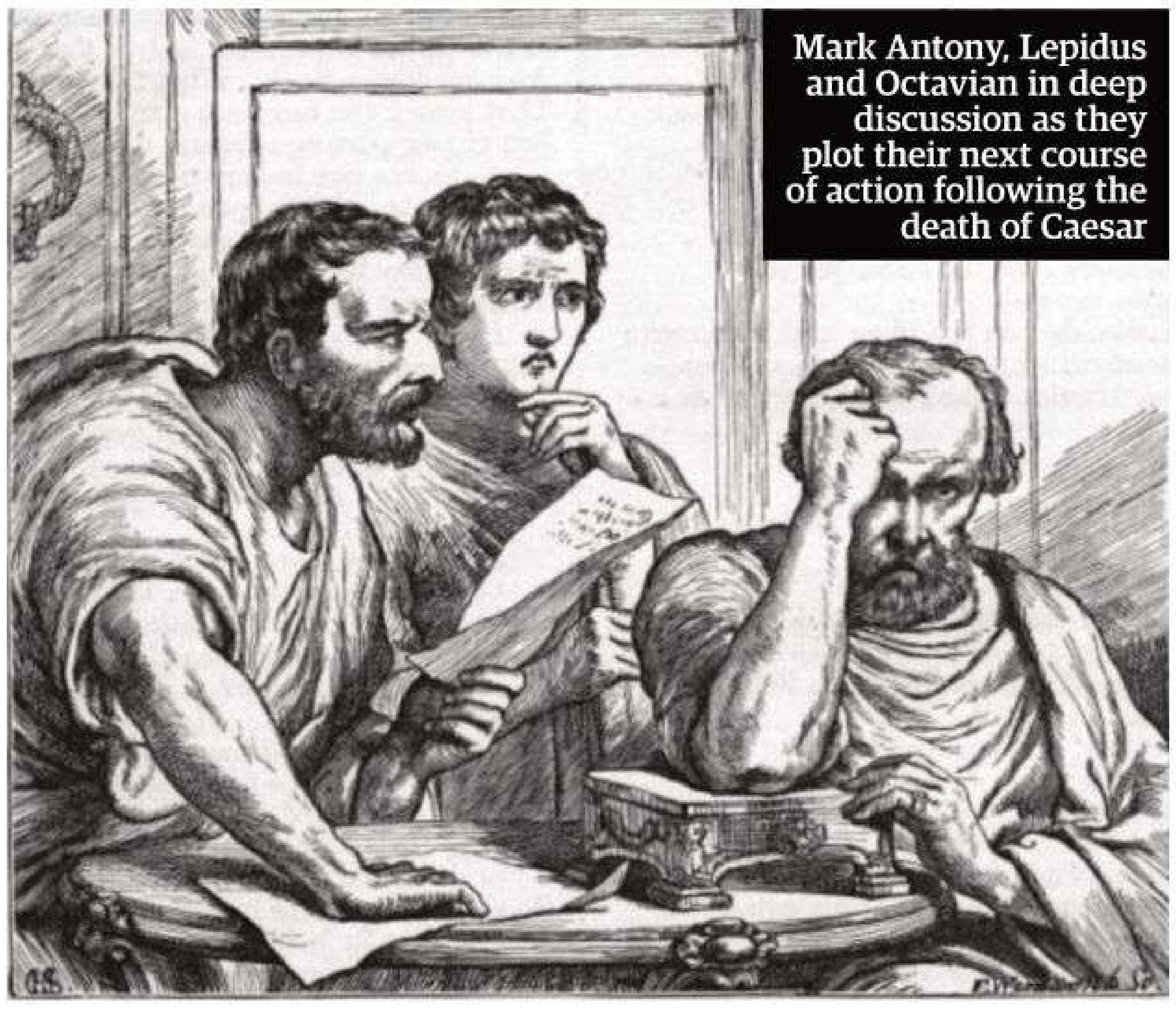
Gladiatorial glamour in Rome

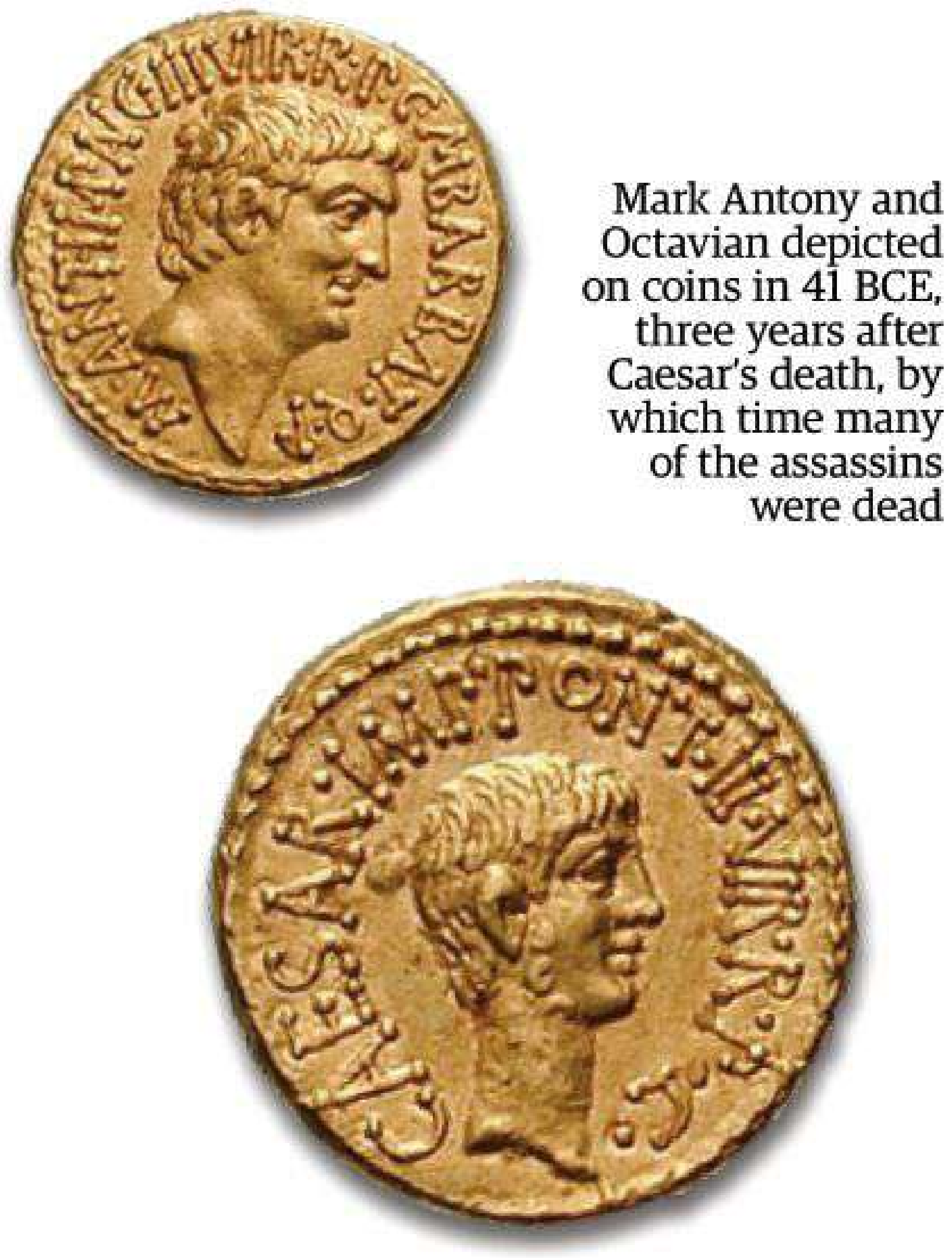
One of the most recognisable monuments in the world, the Colosseum in Rome, was completed in 80 CE, more than 120 years after Caesar's death, but its existence owes much to his foresight.

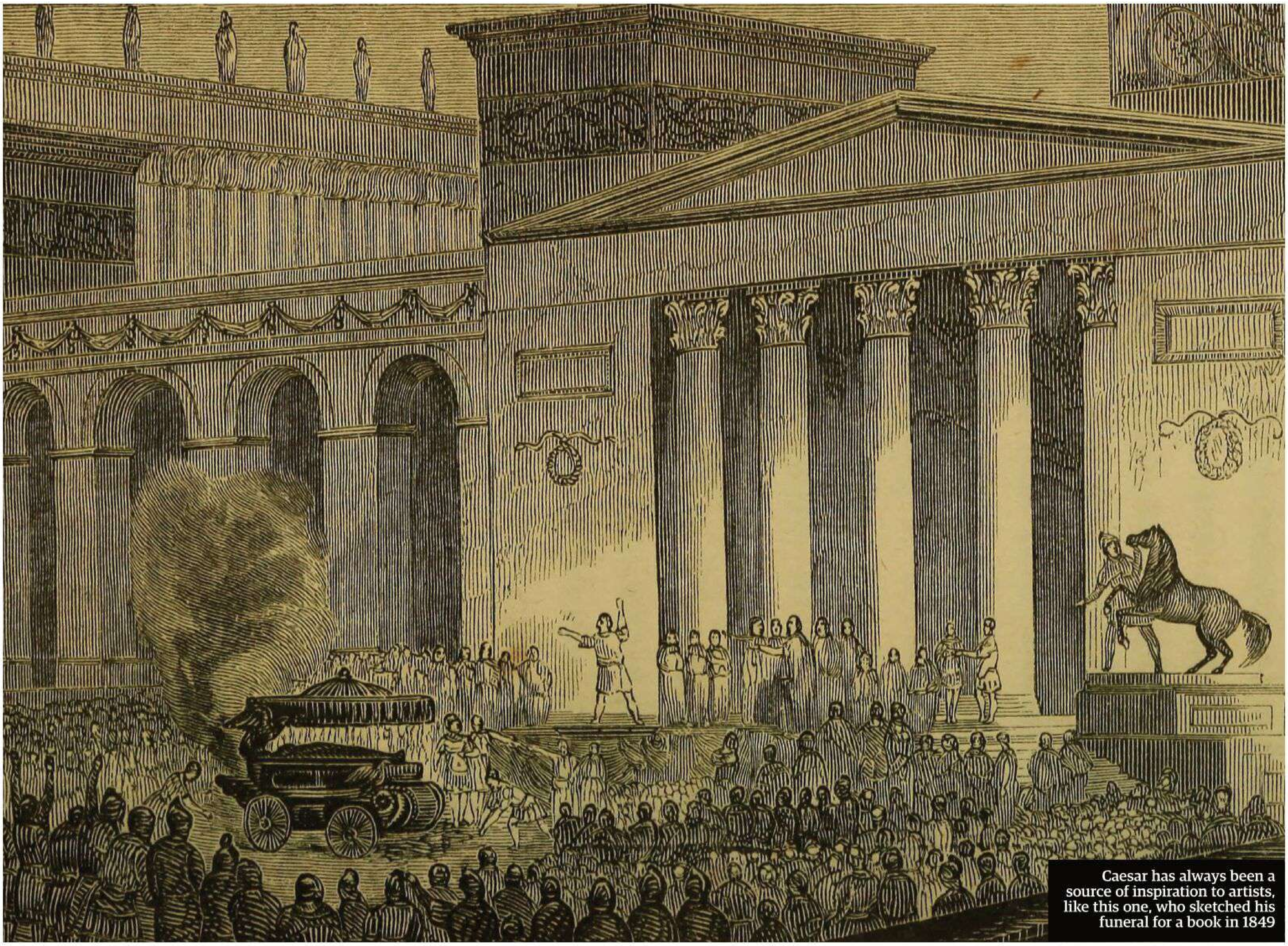
Gladiators had been entertaining Romans for centuries before Caesar's rise to power, with the first such contest recorded in 264 BCE. Known also as the 'funeral games' because they were staged to honour the death of a man of importance, this particular gladiatorial face-off involved only three sets of fighters. Over the course of the next two centuries the contests became more elaborate, but it was Caesar who seized on their appeal, using it to increase his popularity among the people. Thus the spectacular gladiatorial show staged in 65 BCE to honour his father – who had been dead for 20 years – was in reality more a chance to win over Rome's citizens, who flocked to the arena to watch condemned criminals fighting wild beasts.

The tradition continued after Caesar's death as emperors used gladiators to boost their standing among the people. Chariot racing was one innovation, and so was advertising, with contests promoted by elaborate paintings on street walls, attracting crowds of 80,000 to the Colosseum.

Caesar shrewdly boosted his popularity with the people by entertaining them, and this amphitheatre in Susa was one such example


Mark Antony, Lepidus and Octavian in deep discussion as they plot their next course of action following the death of Caesar


Mark Antony and Octavian depicted on coins in 41 BCE, three years after Caesar's death, by which time many of the assassins were dead



Caesar has always been a source of inspiration to artists, like this one, who sketched his funeral for a book in 1849

Caesar's funeral, which began on 18 March. First he eulogised Caesar, then he told the people that their dearly mourned leader had bequeathed to them his gardens near the Tiber and the gift of 300 sesterces per man. Cheers of gratitude rippled around Rome – 'Hail Caesar!'

Then Antony reminded the people why they were here – because their beloved leader was dead, murdered in cold blood by cowardly men he had trusted. Antony, wrote Cassius Dio, mourned his dead friend: "Of what avail, O Caesar, was your humanity, of what avail your inviolability, of what avail the laws? Nay, though you enacted many laws that men might not be killed by their personal foes, yet how mercilessly you yourself were slain by your friends! And now, the victim of assassination, you lie dead in the Forum through which you often led the triumph crowned; wounded to death, you have been cast down upon the rostra from which you often addressed the people. Woe for the blood-bespattered locks of gray, alas for the rent robe, which you assumed, it seems, only that you might be slain in it!"

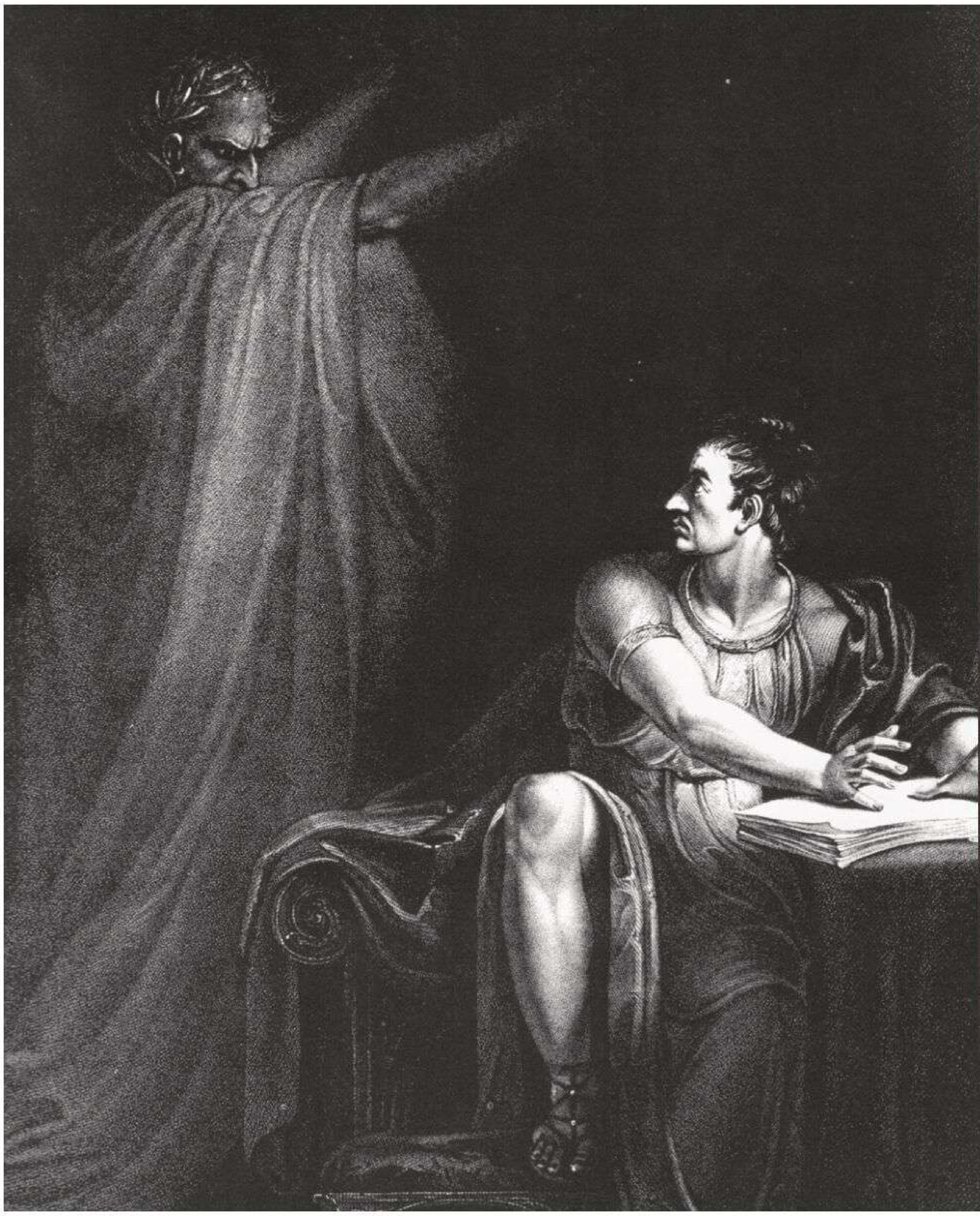
Antony then held up Caesar's robe, shredded and blooded – a sight that proved just too much to bear for many Romans. According to Suetonius, "The populace ran from the funeral, with torches in their hands, to the houses of Brutus and Cassius, and were repelled with difficulty". The mob wanted blood of their own, and denied the chance to kill the two leading conspirators, they set their sights upon another enemy of Caesar, Cornelius Cinna. However, they got the wrong man – the Cinna they killed was Helvius, not Cornelius, but they severed his head anyway and paraded it through the city.

Realising that their lives were now in danger, the conspirators fled Rome, leaving Mark Antony in a position of strength. He had outmanoeuvred his enemies and established himself in the eyes of the people as Caesar's loyal and worthy successor.

It would be a huge slice of good fortune during the Games that would establish Octavian's credentials and fatally undermine Antony

Caesar's family buried the dictator in the family tomb and erected an altar over his remains. A few weeks later, Octavian arrived from Apollonia, where he had been studying, to claim his inheritance. Relations between Octavian and Antony were said to be strained, the older man courteous but contemptuous of the man elected as Caesar's heir.

Octavian, however, possessed his great uncle's guile, and to boost his standing among the people he announced a lavish Funeral Games that July to pay homage to Caesar. While a clever move, it would be a huge slice of good fortune during the Games that would establish Octavian's credentials and fatally undermine Antony's ambition to succeed Caesar. Suetonius described how "a comet blazed for seven days together, rising always about eleven o'clock, and it was supposed to be the soul of Caesar, now received into heaven". The comet,



POSTE ITALIANE
BIMILLENARIO AVGVSTEO
IVLIVM SIDVS
PROFLIGATA OPERA A PATRE MEO PERFECI AVG
30

Above: Fascist Italian dictator Benito Mussolini exploited the legend of Caesar in 1937 by issuing a stamp in his honour

Left: An 1802 painting depicting a scene from Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar,* in which Brutus sees the ghost of the man he killed

described by historians of astronomy as one of the brightest comets in recorded history, was seized on by Octavian as evidence that even the gods honoured Caesar, in which case the people must honour his chosen successor.

At the time of his death Caesar was on his third marriage, having divorced Pompeia in 61 BCE and married Calpurnia two years later. She had agreed to entrust all her husband's correspondence to Mark Antony. She and Caesar had no children, and thus she could bring no influence to bear in determining Rome's political future.

Despite being of privileged birth, Caesar shunned the oligarchy that ruled Rome and seemed more at ease in the company of soldiers than senators.

In the years following his death Caesar continued to be revered by his people. He had secured their fidelity by the generosity of his will and the entertainment he had laid on for them during his lifetime. The many extravagant buildings with which he had adorned Rome (even if he had run up large debts in doing so) were another daily reminder of his munificence.

There was also his literature: everything from poems, an anthology of his speeches and his commentaries on his military campaigns. His seven-book account of his conquest of Gaul, *De bello Gallico*, played a large part in establishing him as a Roman idol. Cicero described the account as "splendid", adding, "It is bare, straight and handsome, stripped of rhetorical ornament… There is nothing in a history more attractive than clean and lucid brevity."

Caesar wrote in a style that was accessible to the man on the street. His thrilling and dramatic accounts of military action, with himself invariably at the heart of the action (he wrote in the third person in an attempt to make the writing appear neutral), won him a legion of fans. Suetonius, writing more than 100 years after Caesar's death, called him "one of the most eminent writers of the age in which he lived". Like Cicero, he praised the "purity, precision, and perspicuity" of his prose.

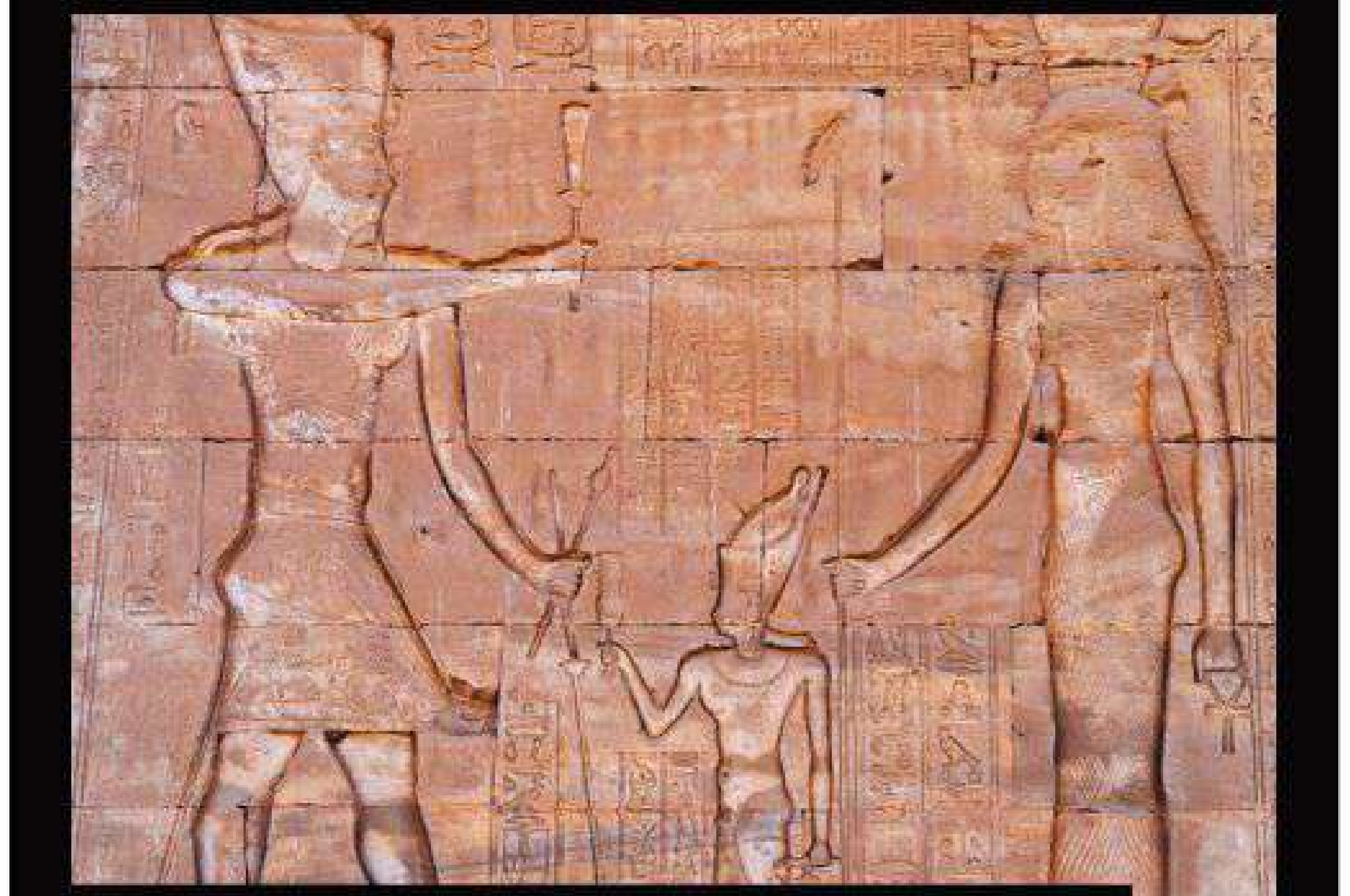
However, Suetonius also went on to propagate a more critical appraisal of Caesar's reign. It accused Caesar of bribery, wild extravagance, "outrageous ambition" and of initiating a civil war for his own financial gain. However, Suetonius tempered his criticism by describing the corruption at the heart of the Republic, implying that Caesar was the lesser of two evils. Furthermore, wrote Suetonius, "It is to the honour of Caesar, that when he had obtained the supreme power, he exercised it with a degree of moderation beyond what was generally expected by those who had fought on the side of the Republic."

Caesar, like every man, had his flaws. He was vain, avaricious, profligate and promiscuous. Suetonius recalled that "he was much addicted to

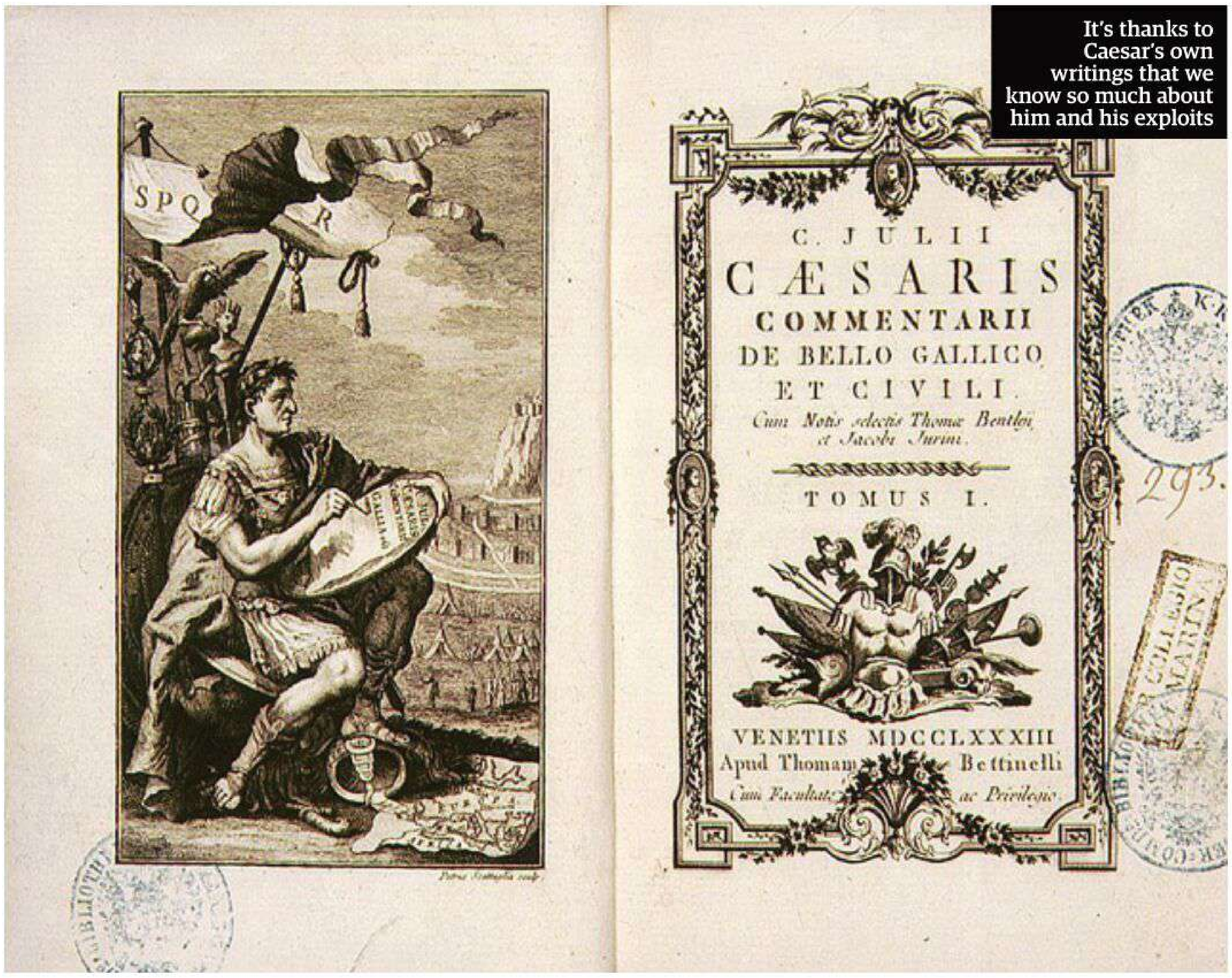
Caesar's illegitimate son

Three years before Caesar's murder his only son was born to Cleopatra, the result of an illicit affair between the pair. They had met following the murder in Egypt of Pompey in 48 BCE, killed on the orders of Ptolemy XIII in the hope of winning Caesar's favour. But it was a miscalculation on the part of the teenage king, and an even bigger blunder was sending Pompey's head to Caesar as a gift. The Roman dictator led his army into Egypt and soon fell under the charm of Cleopatra. The pair became lovers and Caesar had her installed on the Egyptian throne.

Ptolemy Caesar, nicknamed 'Little Caesar', was the first of Cleopatra's four children, the other three springing from her passionate alliance with Mark Antony after Caesar's death. The child ruled Egypt with his mother from 44 BCE, and it was Cleopatra's fervent wish that he would grow into as famous a man as his father. But Cleopatra's love for Mark Antony proved fatal for her son, who was seen by Octavian as an obstacle in his drive for power. When Mark Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide within a few weeks of each other in 30 BCE, Octavian had Ptolemy Caesar killed, thereby removing the threat to his ambition.



Cleopatra VII, Julius Caesar and their son Caesarion (later her co-regent Ptolemy XV Caesar), carved on the Hathor Temple, Egypt



C. JULII
CÆSARIS
COMMENTARII
DE BELLO GALLICO
ET CIVILI.
Cum Notis selectis Thomæ Bentleji,
et Jacobi Jurini.

TOMUS I.

VENETIIS MDCCLXXXIII
Apud Thomam Bettinelli
Cum Facultate ac Privilegio.

It's thanks to Caesar's own writings that we know so much about him and his exploits

women, as well as very expensive in his intrigues with them, and that he debauched many ladies of the highest quality". That, however, was not uncommon in Roman times. However, his rejection of wine was. Caesar liked to have a clear head. This was another reason he was seen as separate from the majority of senators, a cosy cartel who drank and partied together.

Despite being of privileged birth, Caesar shunned the oligarchy that ruled Rome and seemed more at ease in the company of soldiers than senators. They, in turn, like the ordinary citizens of Rome, saw Caesar as more representative of them than any other senator. That's why he was able to win the civil war he initiated by crossing the Rubicon in 49 BCE. "Caesar had not overthrown the oligarchy," wrote the eminent Victorian scholar James Froude, Professor of History at the University of Oxford. "Their own incapacity, their own selfishness, their own baseness had overthrown them. Caesar had been but the reluctant instrument of the power which metes out to men the inevitable penalties of their own misdeeds."

> "Caesar's dream was to turn Rome into the centre of the world, a modern, sophisticated city boasting great libraries"

From an early age Caesar had indeed been guilty of outrageous ambition, but once omnipotent in Rome he strove to improve the everyday life of his people. He reformed the calendar in 46 BCE, introducing a regular Julian year of 365 days divided into 12 months, with an extra day intercalated every four years (a leap year).

He sought to eradicate the cronyism of the Senate – depleted in number following the civil war – by appointing several plebeians (commoners) to the rank of patricians, making it therefore more representative of the city. He recruited more praetors, aediles and quaestors, many of whom had been sacked by the Senate in his absence in Gaul for refusing to accept their bribes.

Caesar's dream was to turn Rome into the centre of the world, a modern, sophisticated city boasting great libraries, magnificent buildings, including a temple to Mars, and an aqueduct supplying its citizens with water. To this end he had proclaimed that no free man between the age of 20 and 40 should leave Rome for a foreign colony; rather they were needed in his vast building project.

If, as Suetonius wrote, this ambition was "outrageous", then it was also admirable. For Caesar understood that the Republic could not continue under the rule of a corrupt and cruel nobility who cared only about their own enrichment. "The obstinacy, the ferocity, the treachery of the aristocracy had compelled Caesar to crush them," wrote James Froude in 1879. "In Caesar alone were combined the intellect and the power necessary for such a work." Caesar paid for his work with his life, but his sacrifice was not in vain.

There emerged an empire to replace the oligarchy, and although many of the emperors proved incompetent, the changes to the administration of Rome wrought by Caesar ensured that the state survived for another 500 years, spreading the influence of the Greco-Roman civilization throughout the world and saving Rome from being overrun by barbarians.

"At the time of his death Caesar was fully fifty-six years old, but he had survived Pompey not much more than four years," wrote Plutarch in the century after Caesar's death. "Of the power and dominion which he had sought all his life at so great risks, and barely achieved at last, of this he had reaped no fruit but the name of it only."

Plutarch had implied that Caesar's ambition had not been worth the effort. He was wrong. Although the great man himself reaped little reward despite his stunning achievements, his legacy was a Rome that survived for centuries after Plutarch's death, a city that would go onto conquer vast swathes of territory on its way to becoming a super power.

A dictator's enduring legacy

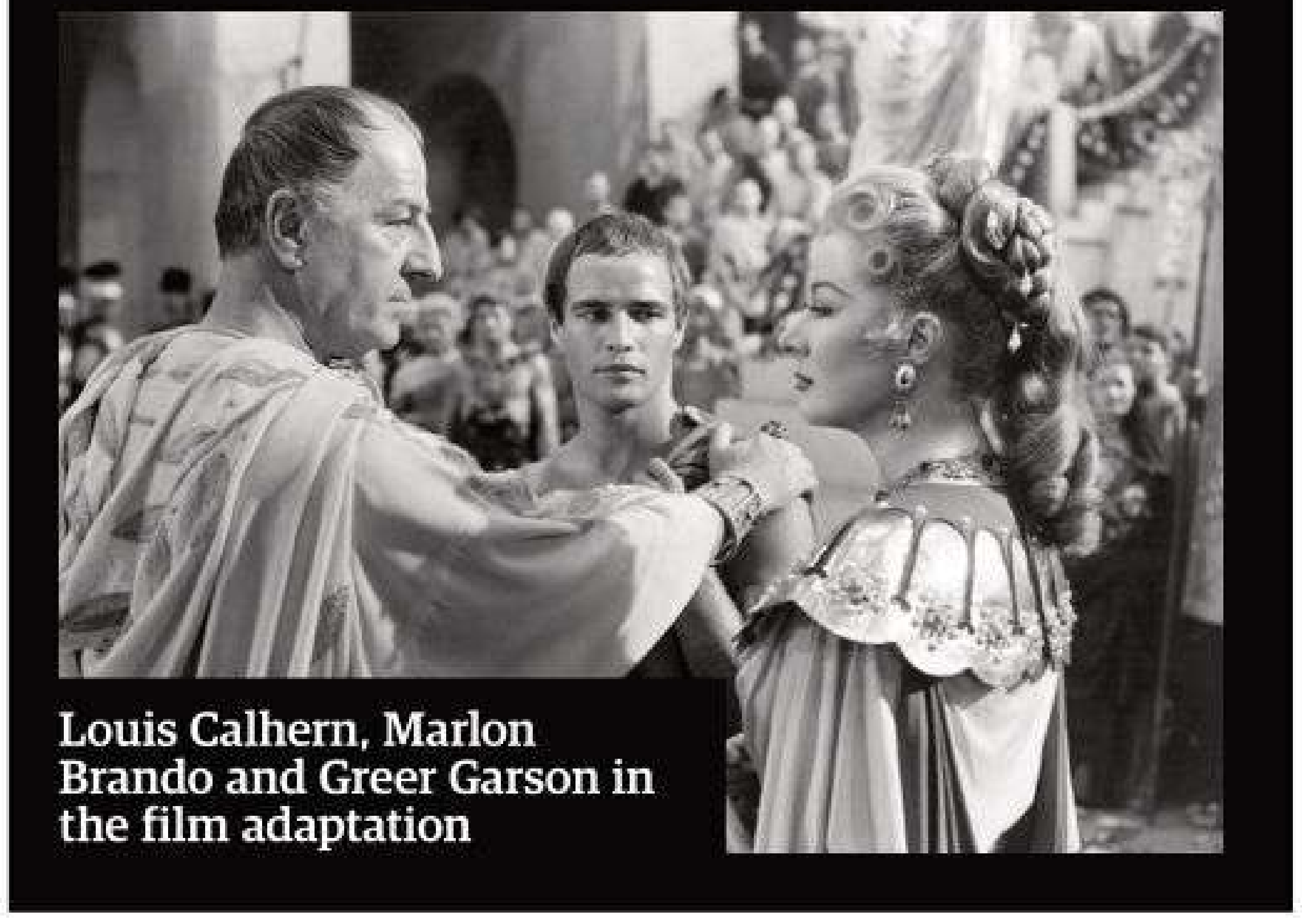
How Gaius Julius Caesar continues to invoke fascination almost 2000 years after his death

There is no doubt that Julius Caesar is one of the most famous and influential men to have ever lived. His reputation as a military leader, political genius and social reformer has led to an obsession with his life that has continued for centuries, right up to this day.

As a result, his legacy has spread throughout our culture, as the world continues to lap up the story of his dramatic rise and fall from power. Examples of Caesar in our modern-day culture are easy to come by. For example, the titles for the now-defunct Emperors of Russia and Germany, Tsar and Kaiser respectively, both derive from Caesar's name. Along the same vein, the month of July is named in his honour. In Las Vegas, a towering six metre statue of the dictator can be found near the entrance of the iconic Caesar's Palace hotel and casino, which is styled to invoke the opulence of the Roman Empire. It is even possible to attribute the first newspaper to Caesar, the *Acta Diurna*, which kept the public informed of the matters of the Republic in a similar fashion to today's papers. However, Caesar's presence in today's culture is most prevalent through modern

Julius Caesar (Film, 1953)

Louis Calhern took on the role of Caesar in the 1953 film adaption of Shakespeare's famous play, *Julius Caesar*. At time of its release, it was hailed by *TIME* magazine as 'the best Shakespeare that Hollywood has yet produced.' It focuses on the plot to remove Caesar from power, who has let his own ambition go to his head, and which ultimately culminates in his brutal assassination. Just as Caesar continues to permeate through our modern-day culture, one of the key themes of the play and adaption is that Caesar was so powerful, that he continued to hold influence even after his death. Calhern's Caesar is shown to be a highly skilled man in terms of politics and the military, but it also gives rise to fears of those around him that he would become too dominant if left alive. The unrest that grows from this serves to be his downfall – with his killers believing that their actions are protecting the Republic. A fun fact is that the director of this film, Joseph L. Mankiewicz, also directed the 1963 epic *Cleopatra*, which features actor Rex Harrison as Caesar.


Louis Calhern, Marlon Brando and Greer Garson in the film adaptation

Rex Harrison as Julius Caesar in *Cleopatra*, 1963

media, particularly in terms of film and television. Various film productions were released between the 1940s and the 1960s that featured the character of Caesar, some of which were based on the famous play by William Shakespeare. Although this waned from the 1970s onwards, the interest in Caesar, and the ancient world in general, was revived following the release of *Gladiator* in 2000. Since then, he has continued to appear in film and television productions whether they are based on him, ancient Rome, or his contemporaries such as Spartacus or Cleopatra. In addition to this, in the past century the rise and fall of many for controversial, fascist political figures could perhaps be one of the reasons why the tale of Julius Caesar has continued to cause intrigue. The term 'fascist' after all finds its roots in the Latin term 'fasces' or 'fascio littorio', which referred to a bundle of sticks tied together, a symbol of ancient Roman authority.

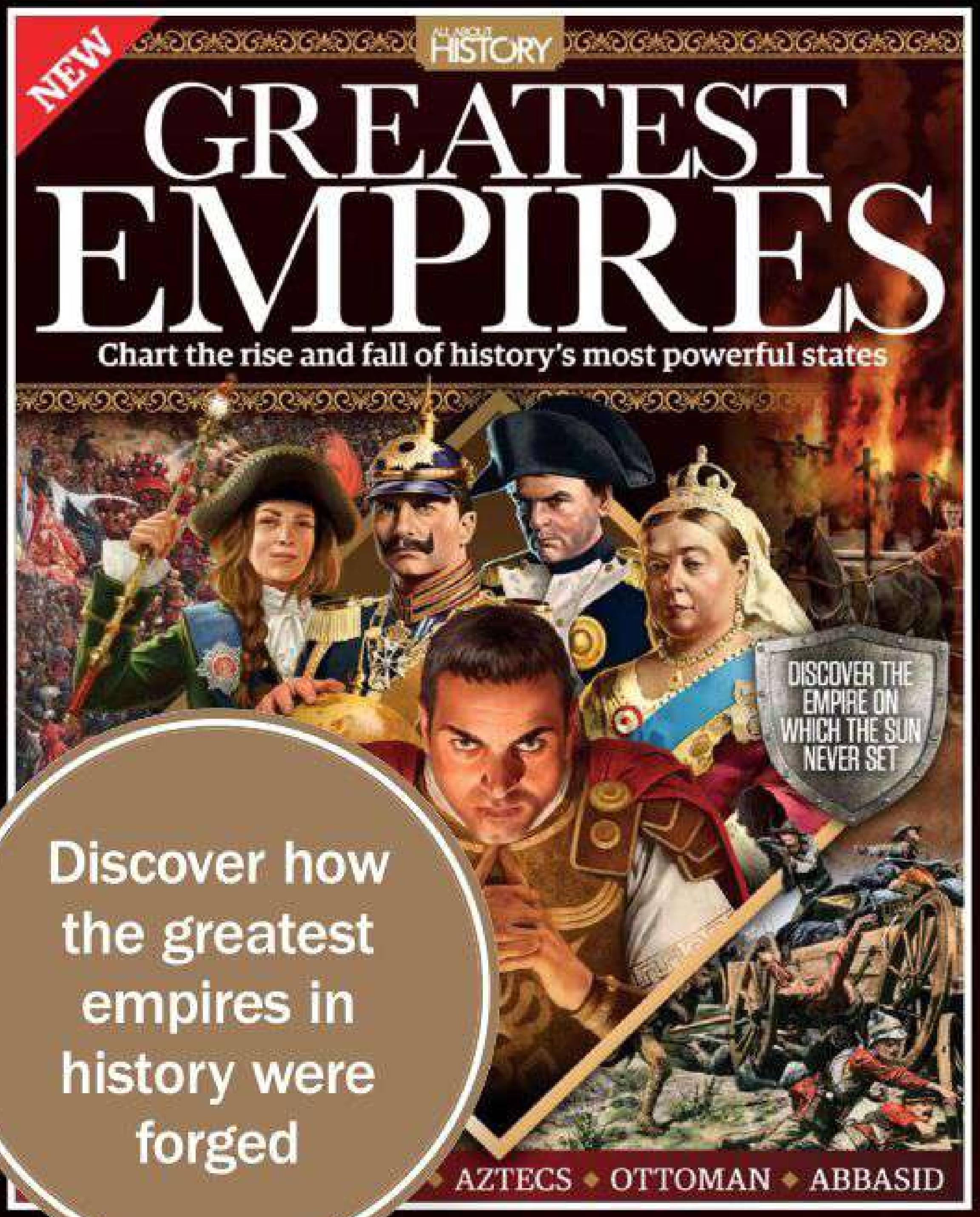
Over the years, numerous on-stage productions of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar have been used to comment on the political atmosphere at that time. Mussolini, the current President of the United States, Donald Trump, and other political leaders have found themselves turned into the character of Caesar by those who oppose them. Of course, this is significant as Caesar is violently murdered in the play - clearly there are many who feel that the legacy of his downfall is still relevant today. Caesar developed a cult of personality so strong during his lifetime that it is unsurprising that it continues to intrigue us to this day. It is not often that the world witnesses a person who made achievements on such grand scale like Caesar did - only to suffer one of the most notorious deaths in history.

Warren William as Julius Caesar in the film *Cleopatra*, released in 1934

Rome (TV Series, 2005 - 2007)

In the first series of the HBO and BBC production, *Rome*, Caesar is portrayed by Ciarán Hinds. Physically, there is little resemblance between the onscreen Caesar and the real one, with most critics note the lack of thinning hair on Hinds, one of Caesar's trademark features. However, it is generally considered to be one of the most authentic depictions of his personality in recent modern media. Hinds' Caesar is a shrewd and calculating man who demands respect from those around him. Moments such as his outrage at the assassination of Pompey is a reflection of real-life events, although there are still many fabrications. His ability to manipulate those around him in the series in order to secure his dictatorship is another aspect that seems to resonate highly with other modern portrayals of Caesar. As a result, it has further cemented Caesar's reputation as a skilled and powerful politician in today's consciousness. Having said this, it is interesting that the show also portrays Caesar in a way that others do not. Although some of his actions indicate tyrannical behaviour, the series highlights moments where Caesar showed forgiveness to those who had opposed him – something that does not always feature in other depictions.

Ciarán Hind's version of Gaius Julius Caesar is one of the most popular portrayals of the dictator in modern media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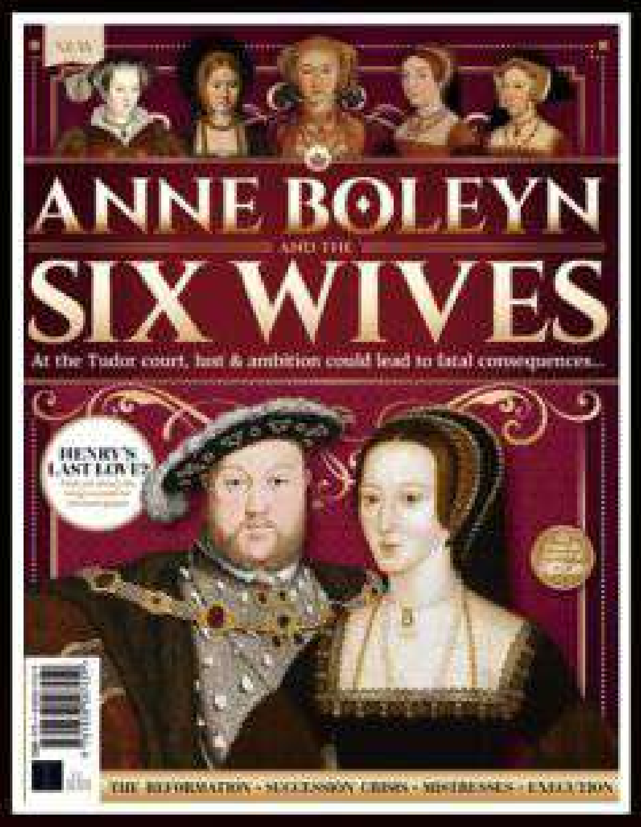
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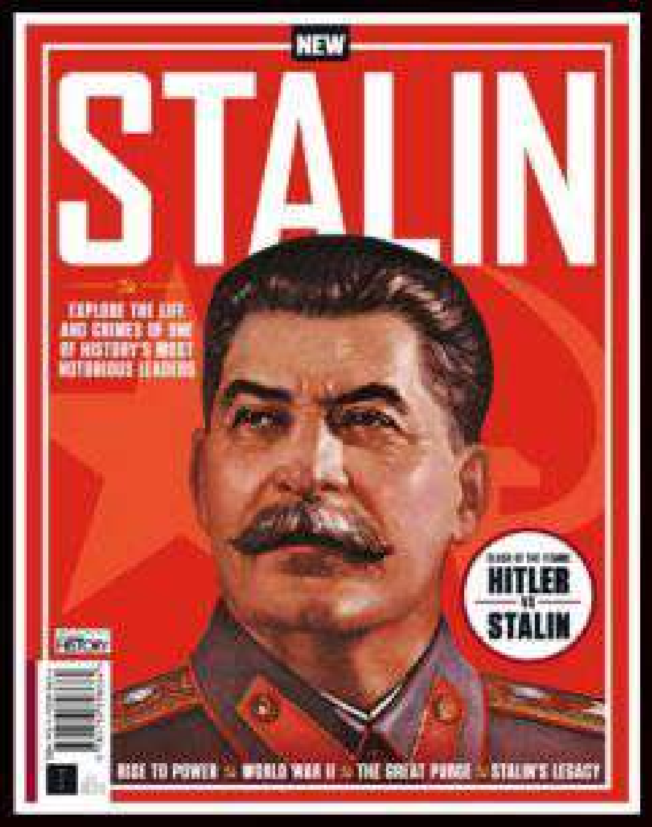
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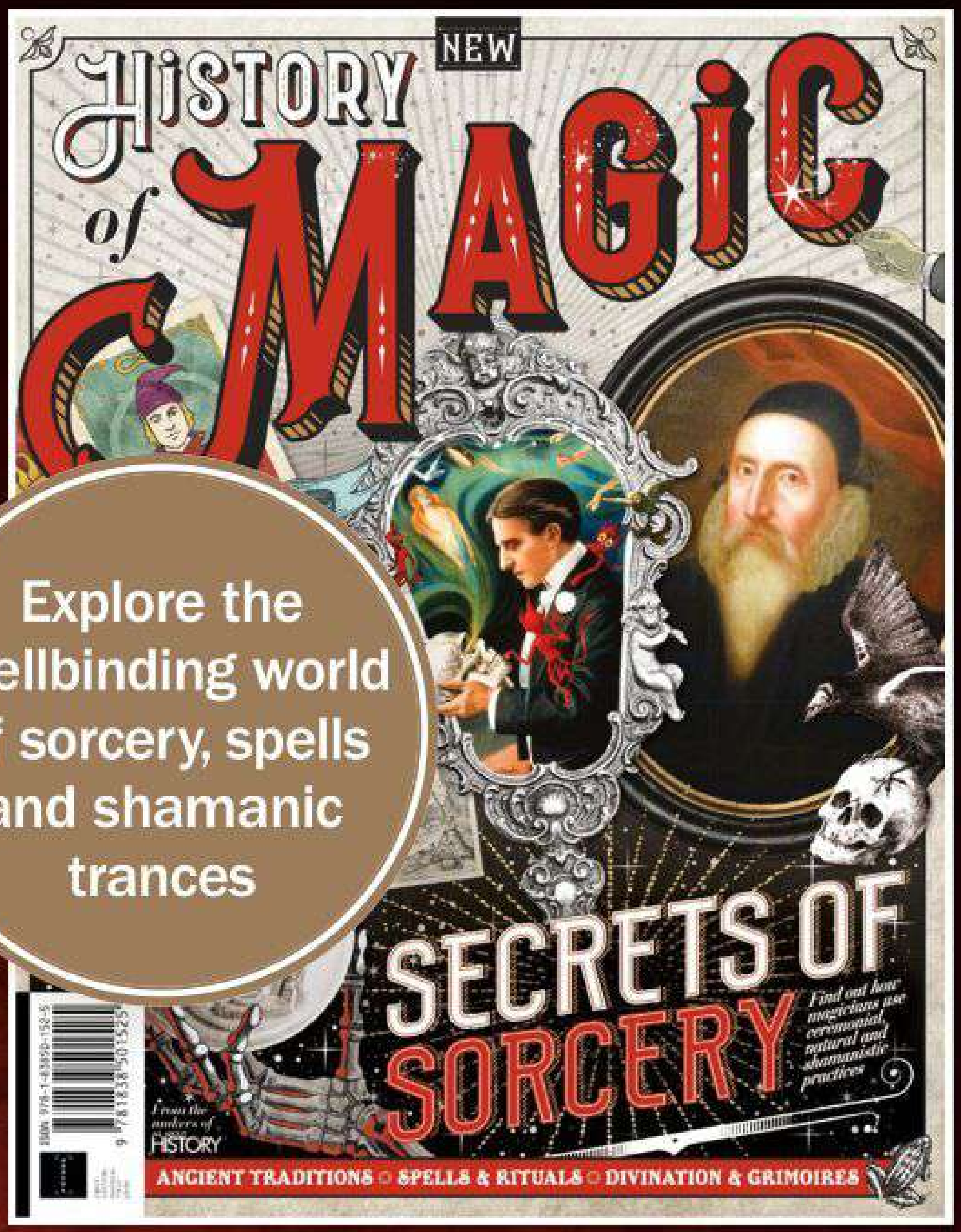
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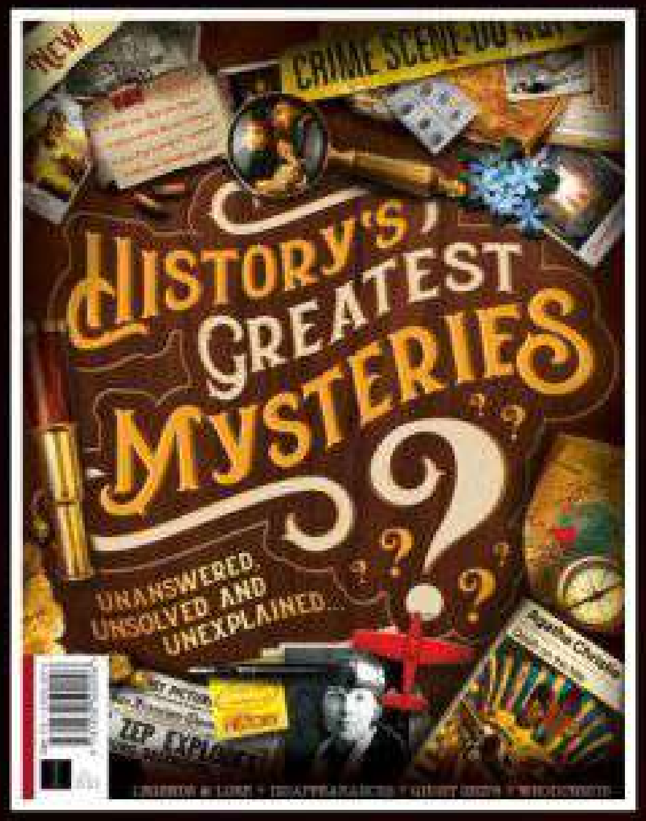
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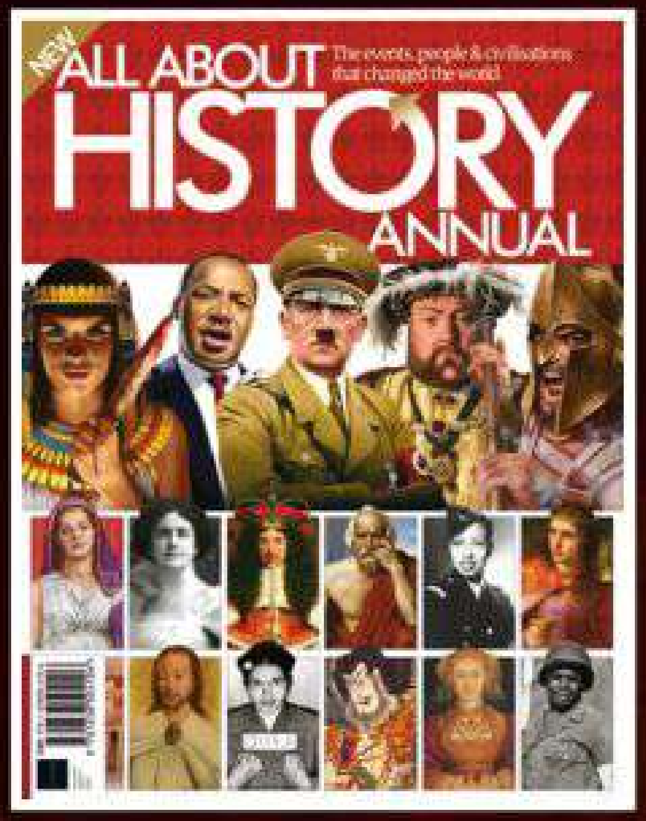
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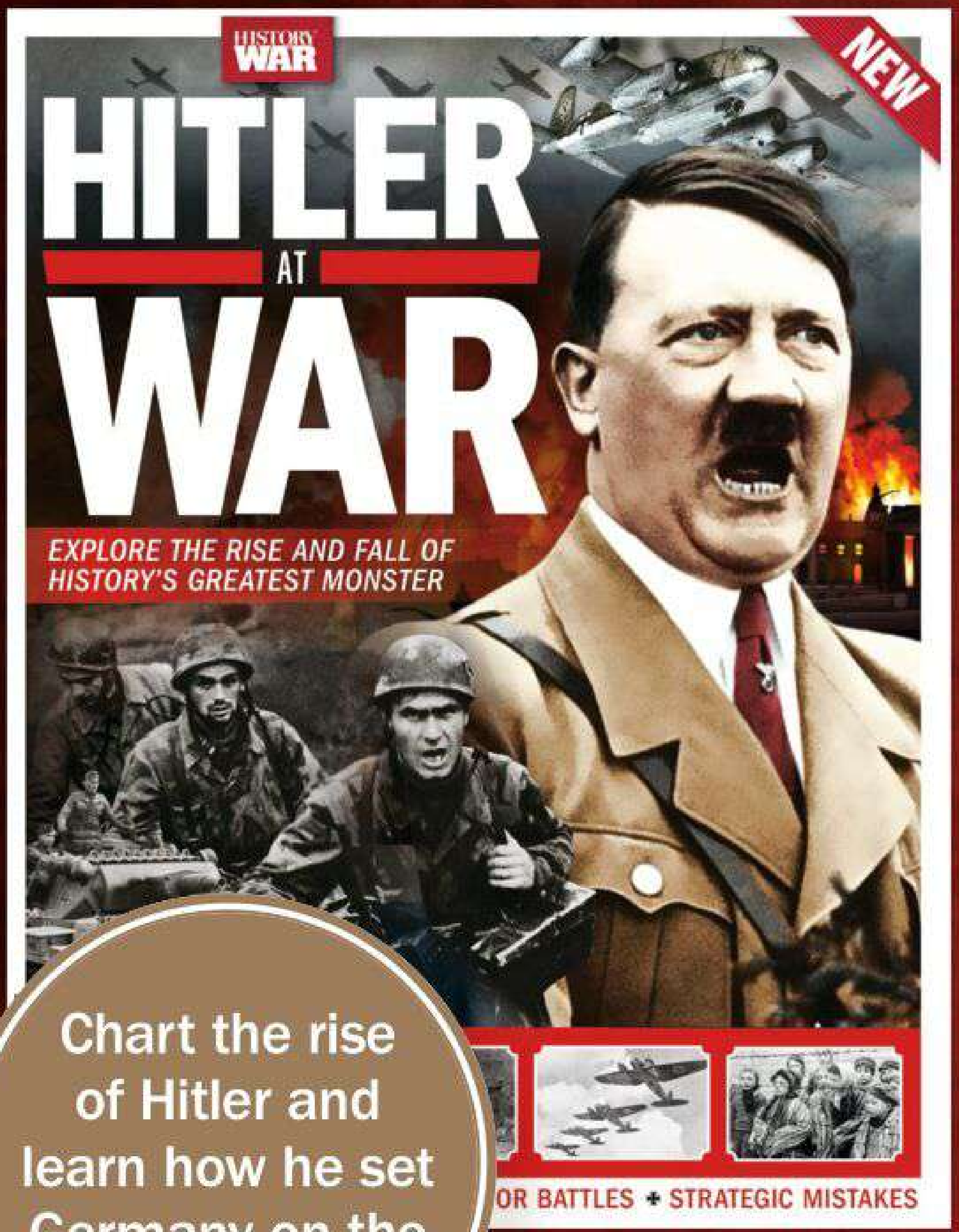
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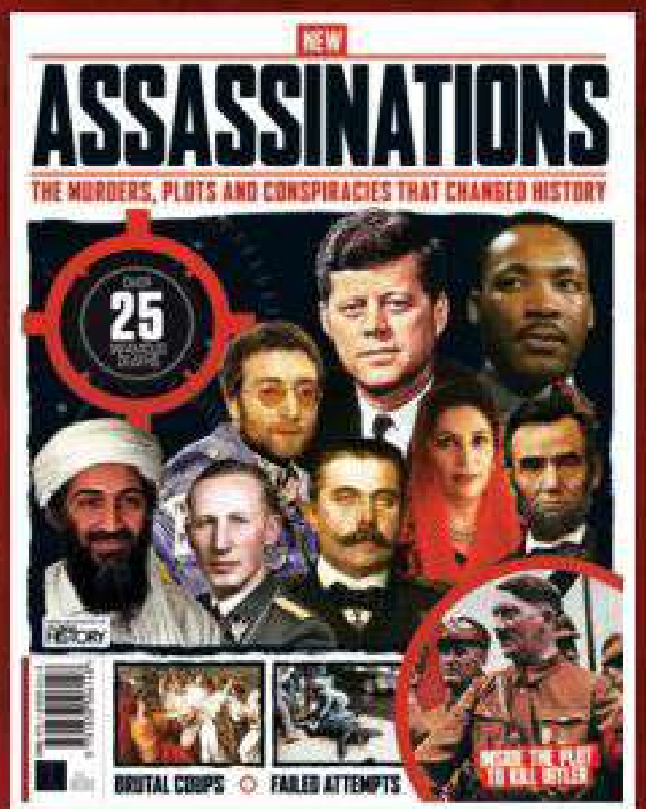
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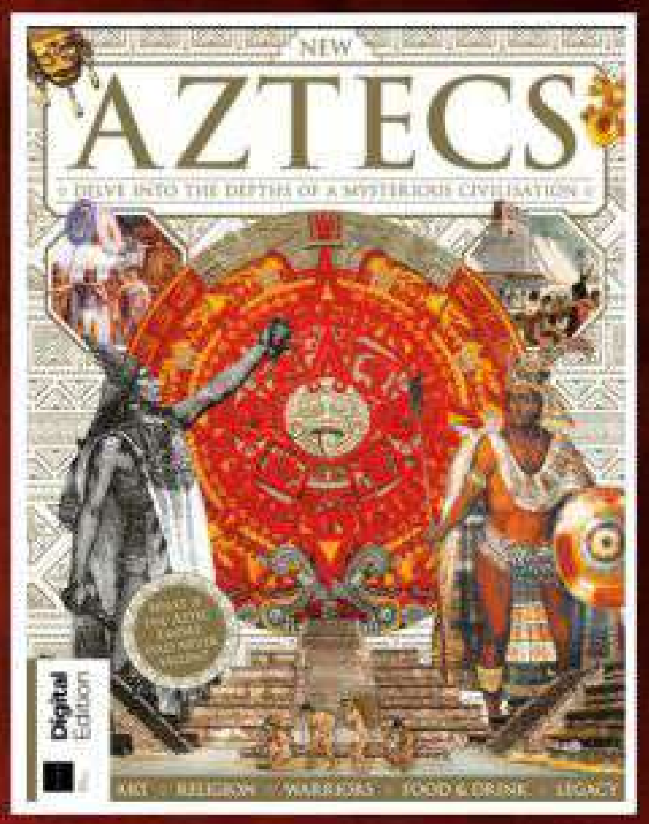

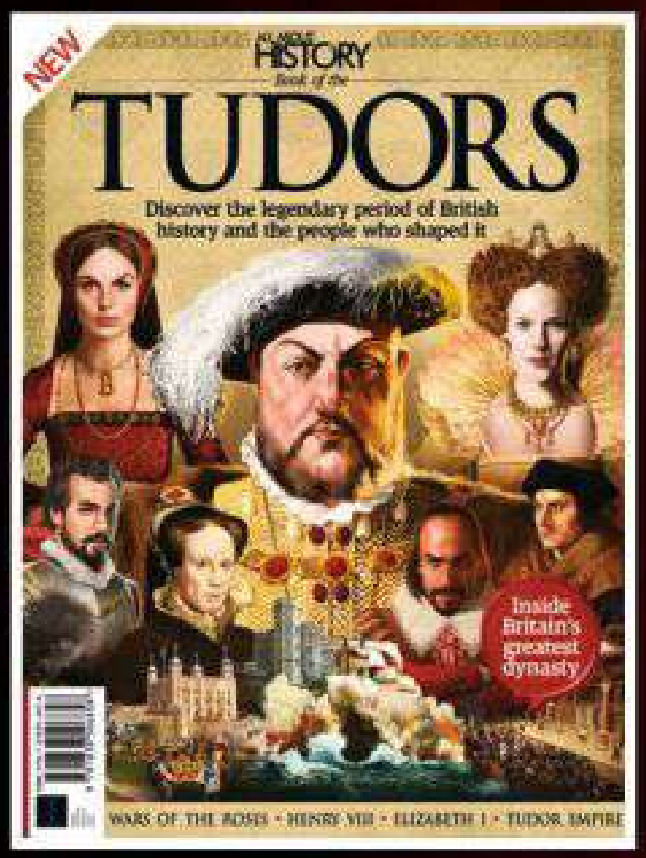

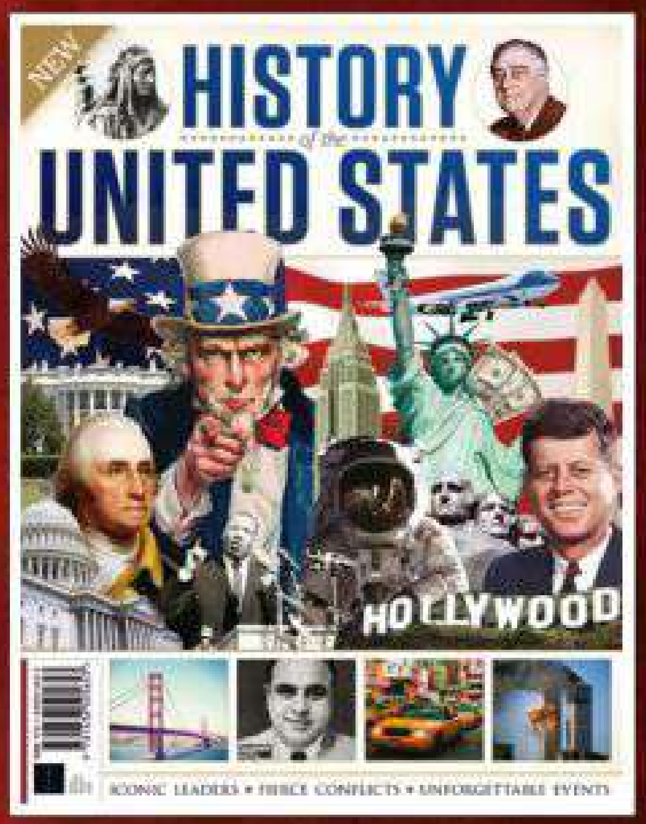
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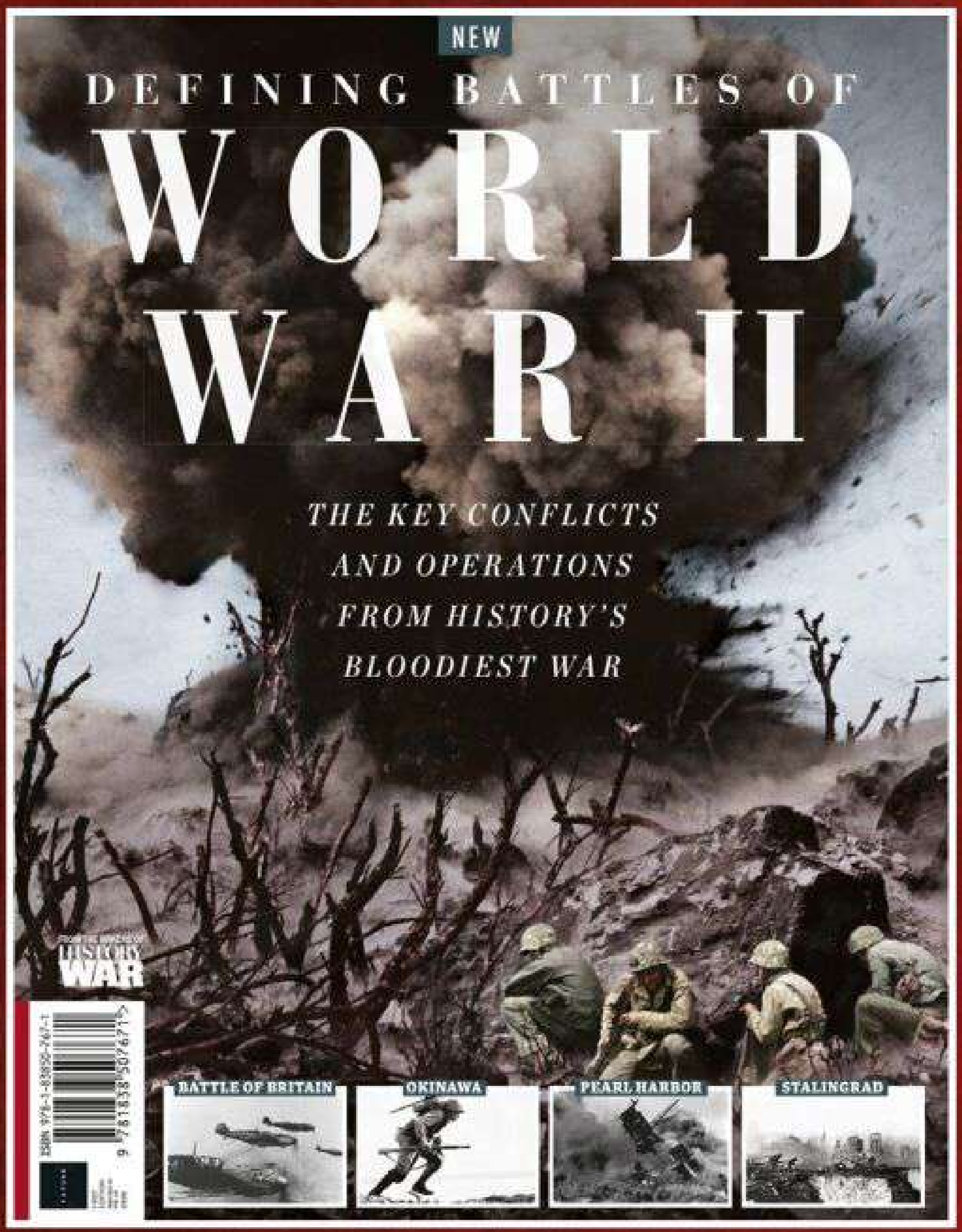
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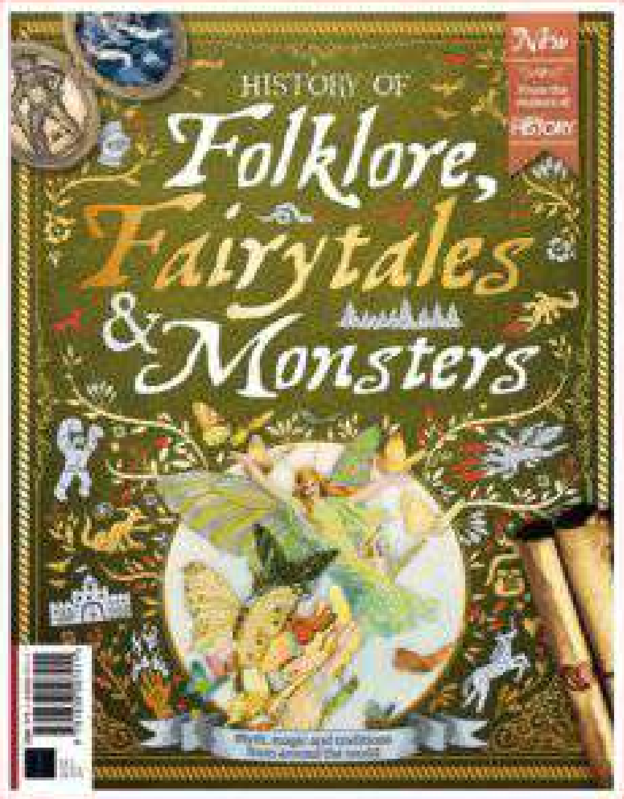
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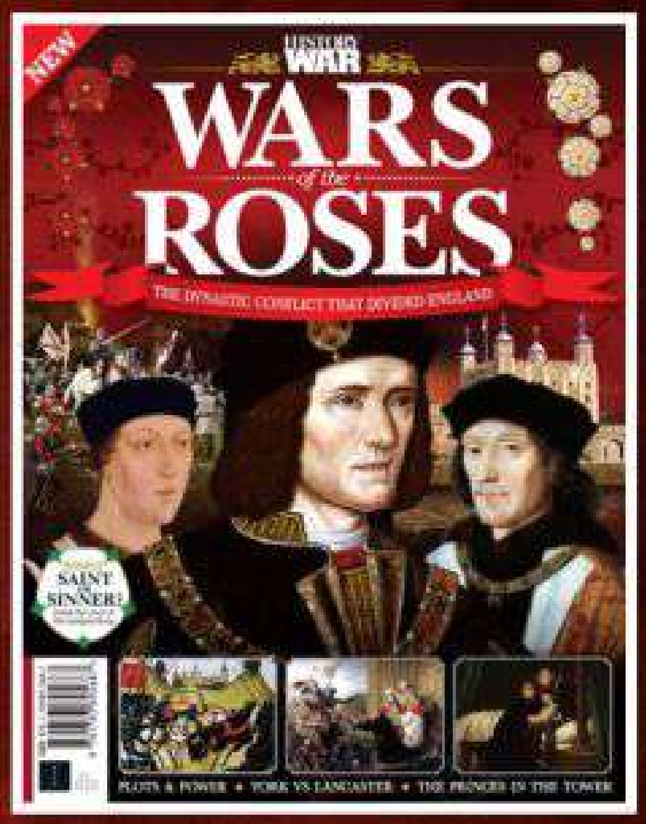
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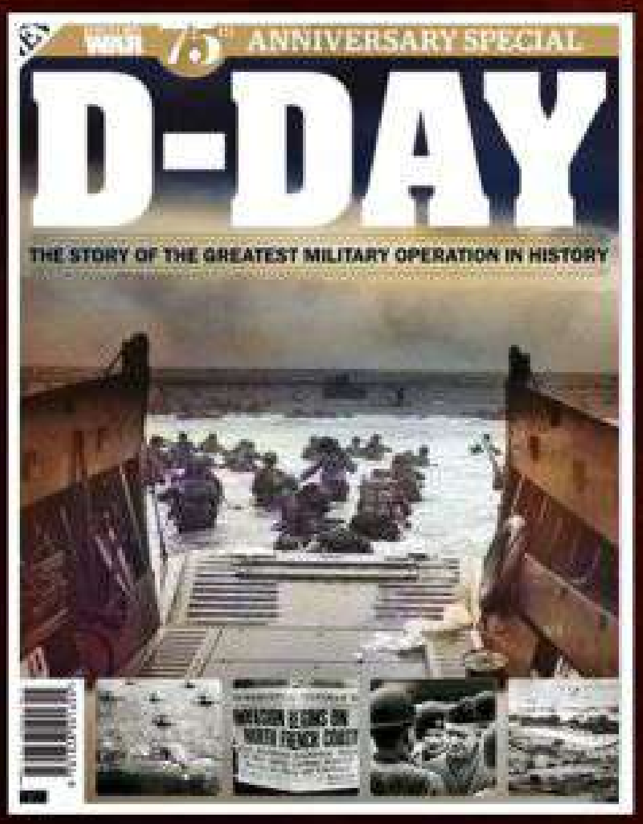
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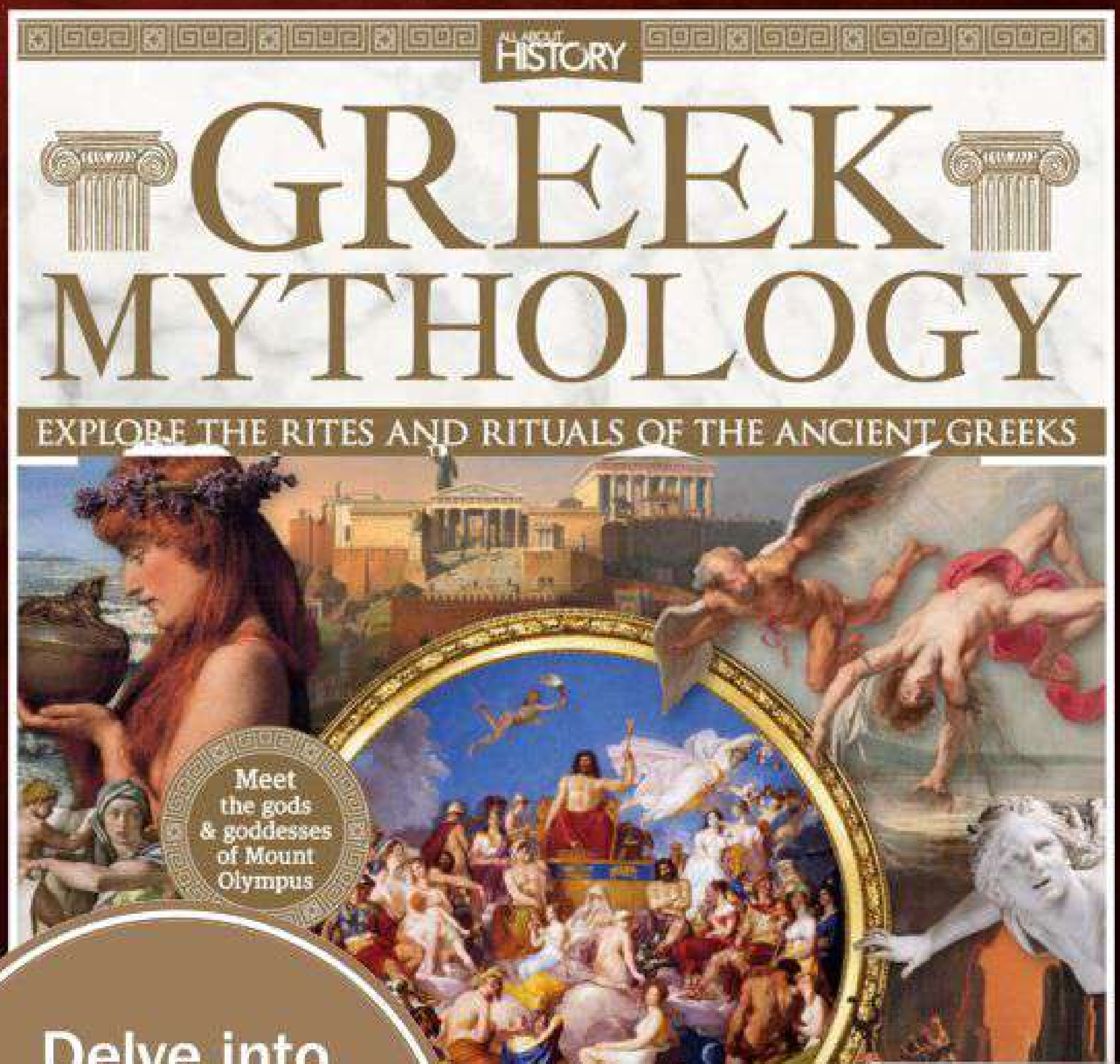
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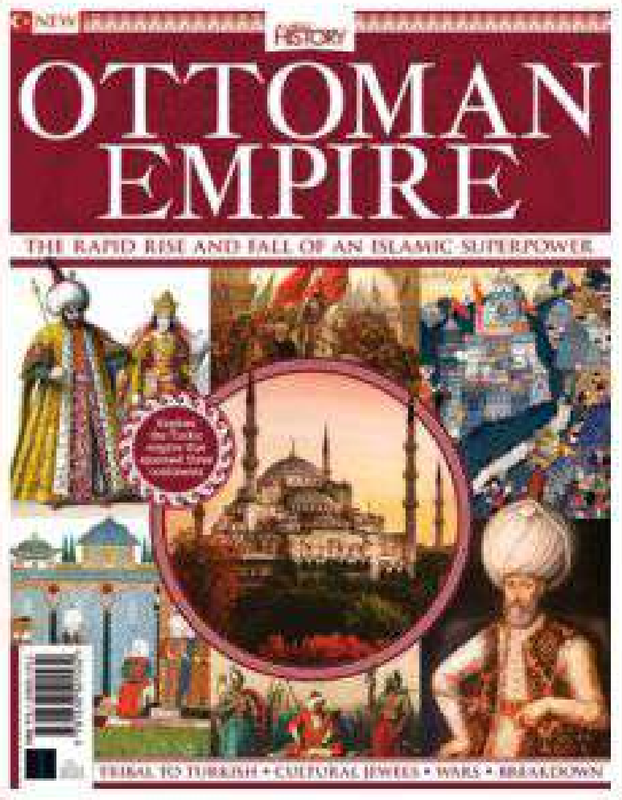
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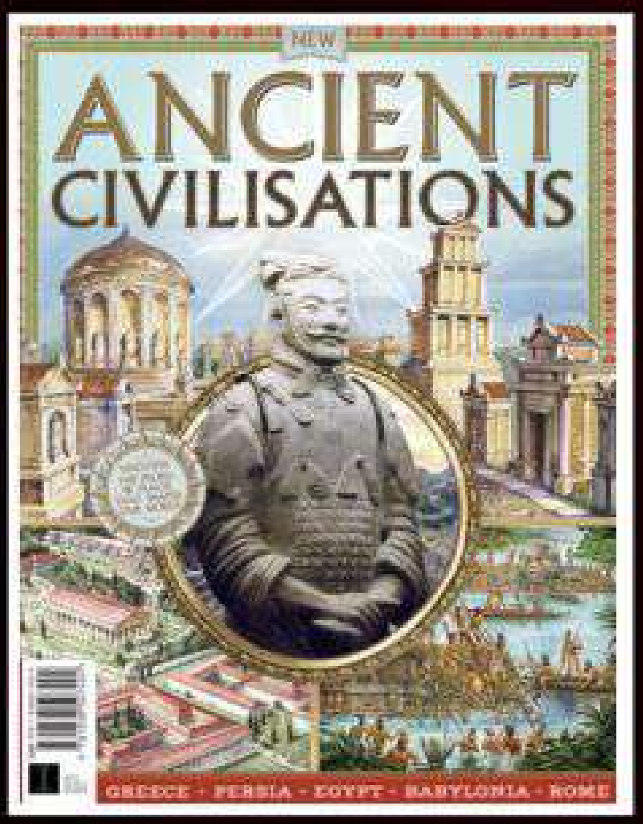
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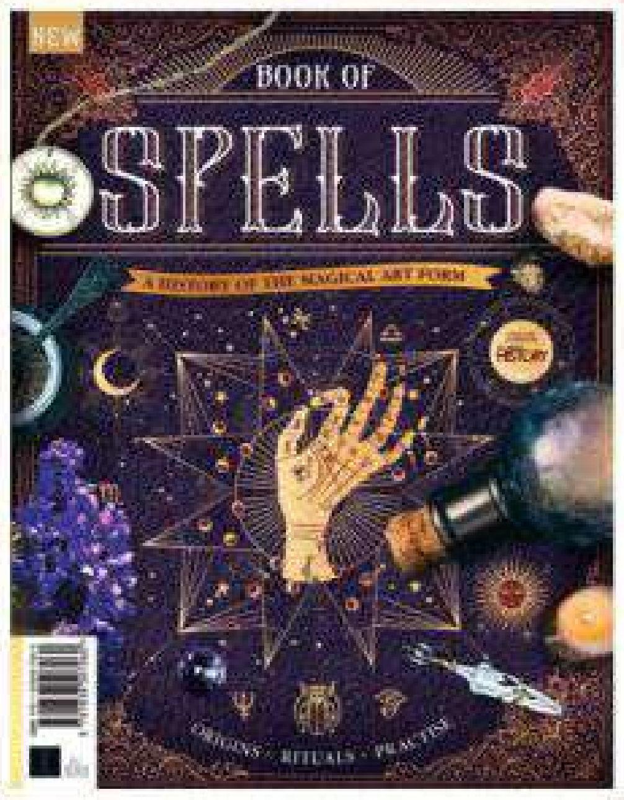
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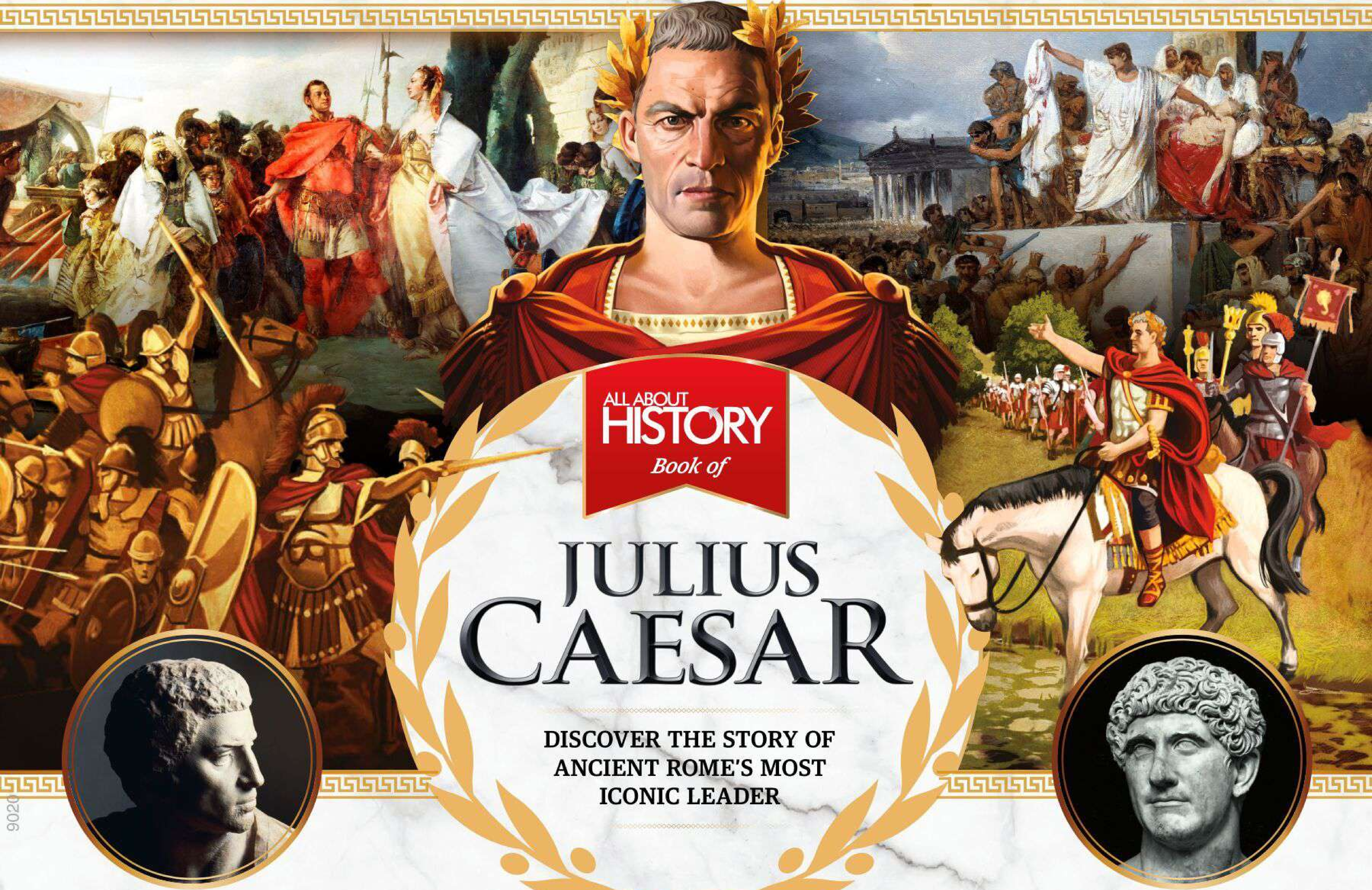

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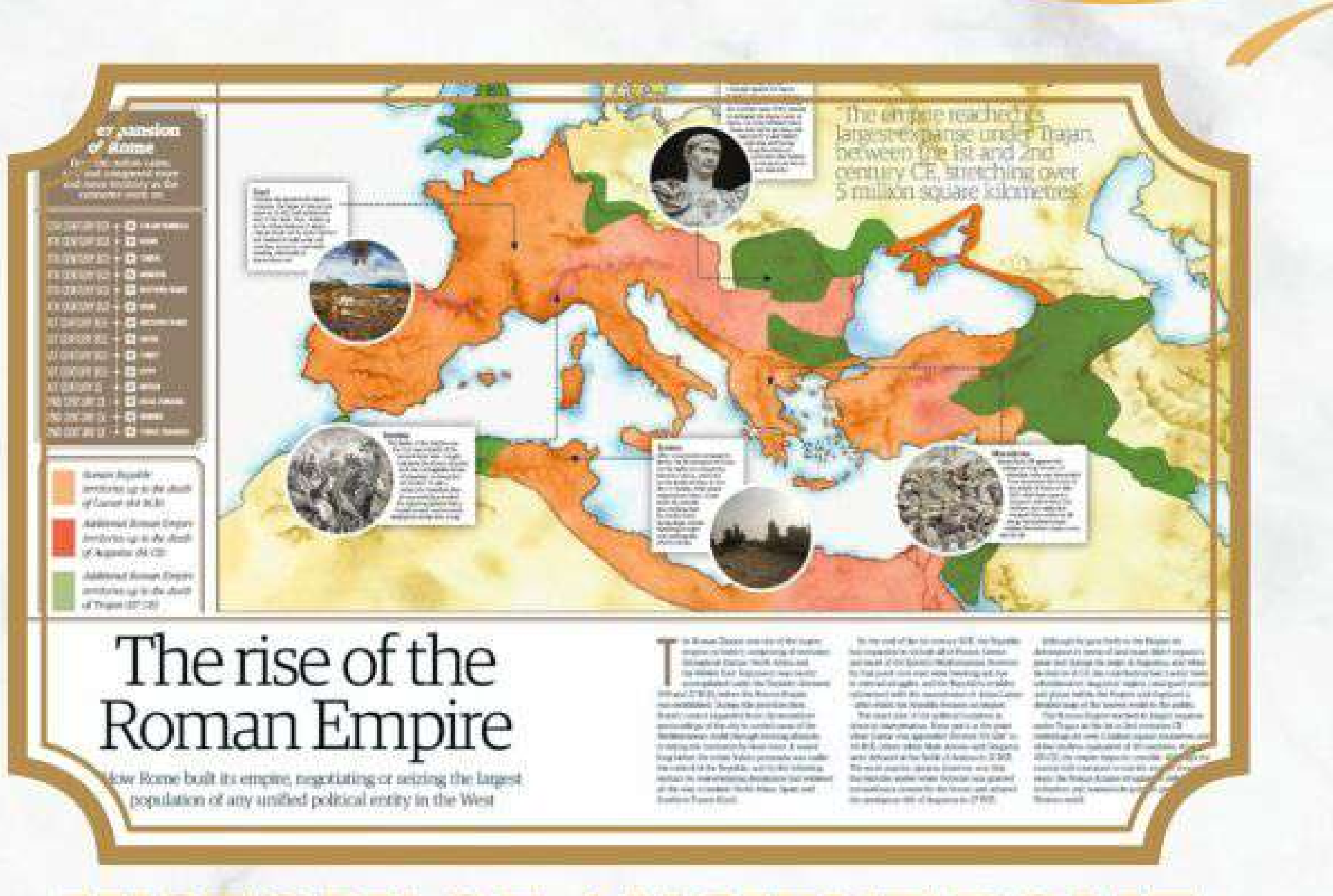

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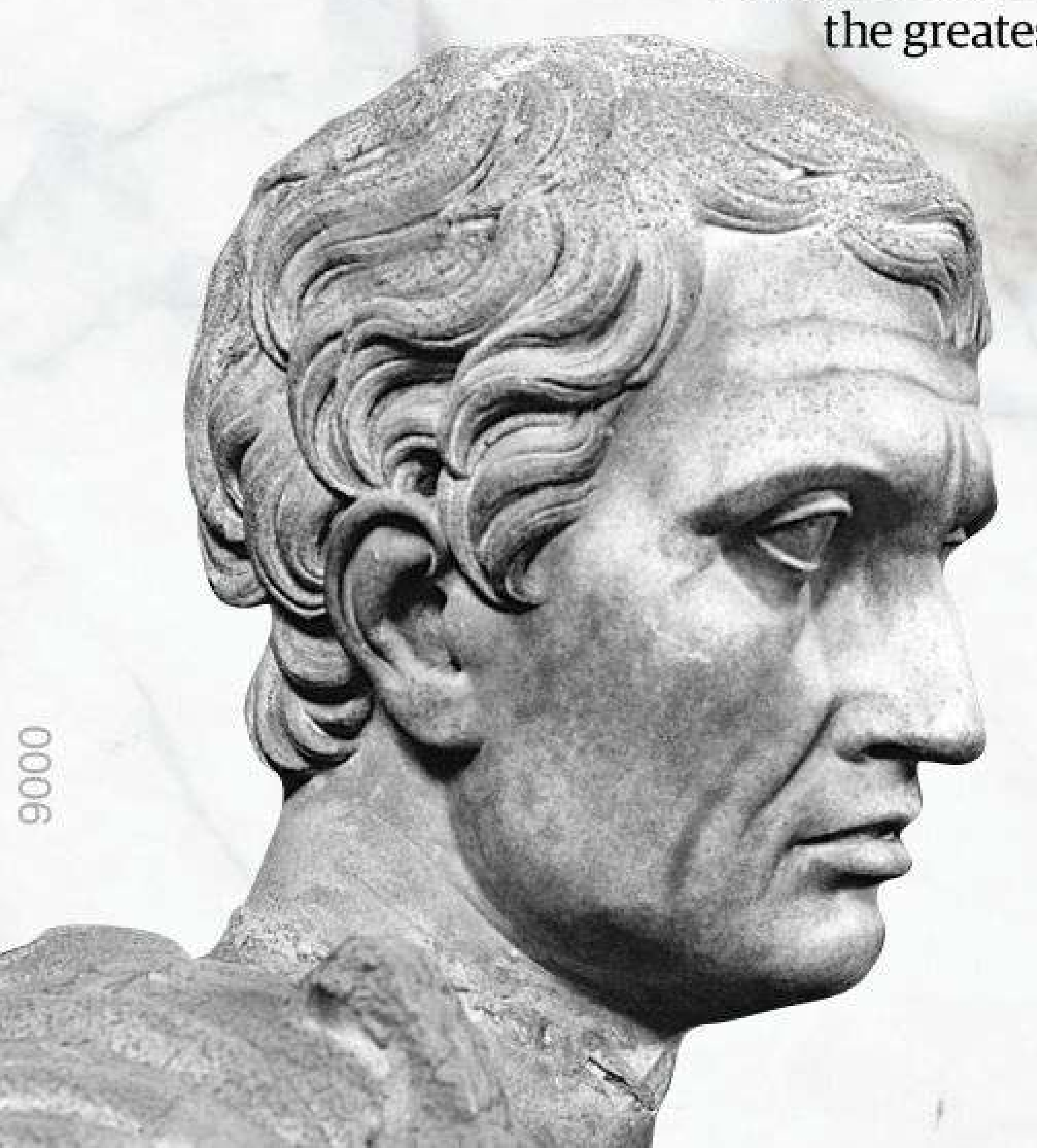
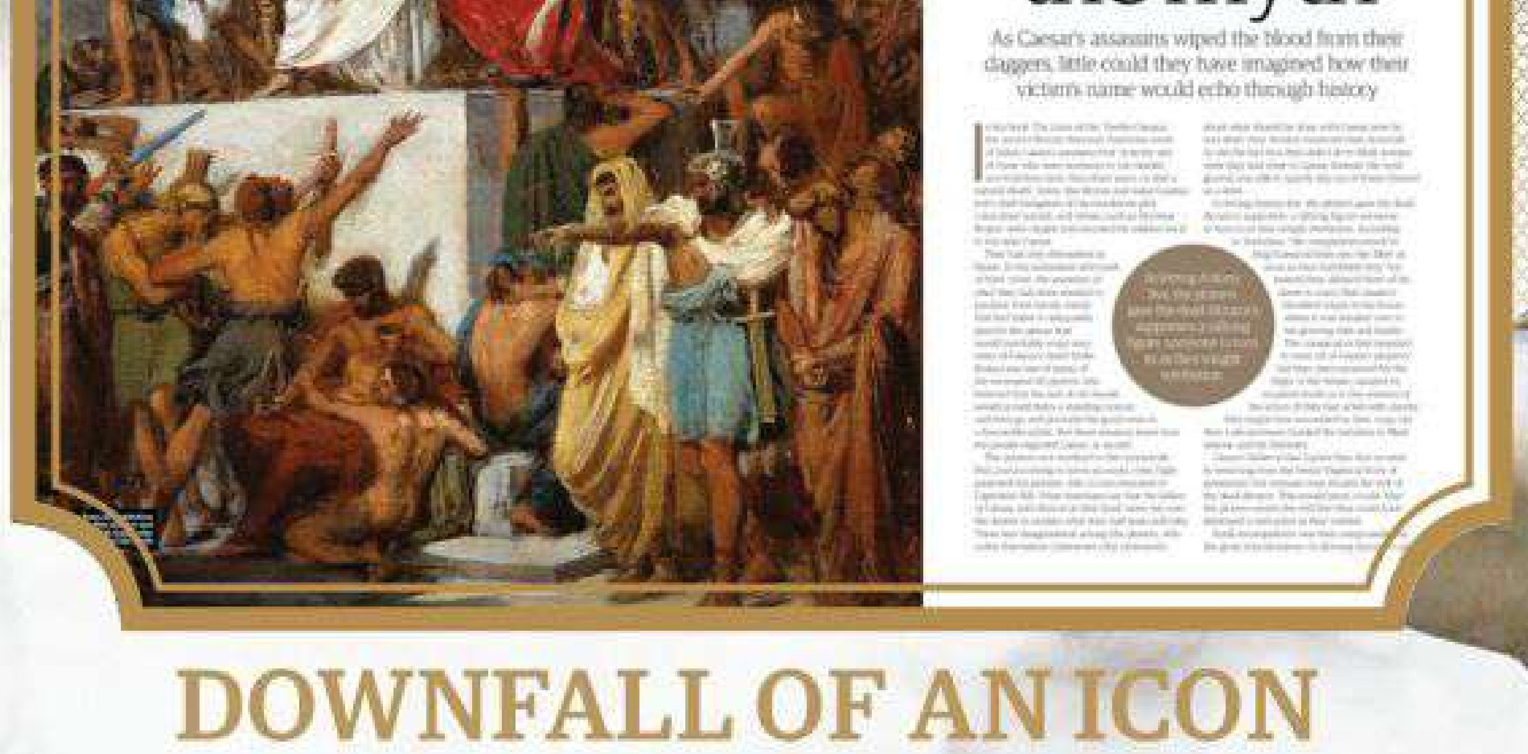
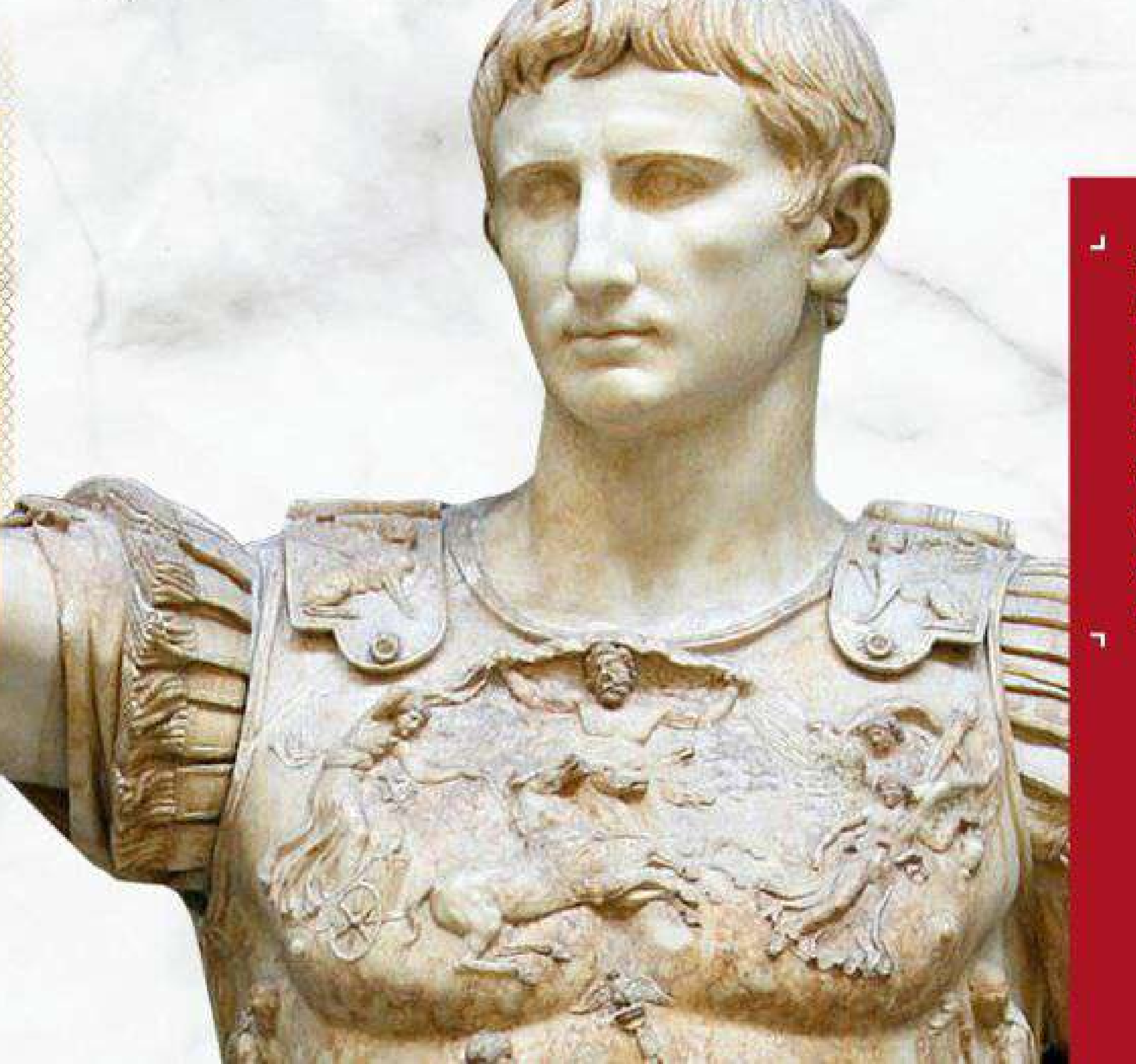
conquests of the great Roman leader





The man and the myth

As Caesar's assassins wiped the blood from their daggers, little could they have imagined how their victim's name would echo through history



DOWNFALL OF AN ICON

Follow Caesar's path to his tragic demise
and uncover the legacy he left behind

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